

**DRIVE
SAFE
STAY
ALIVE**



Vasco Road Safe Highway Coalition

June 2007

Volume 2 of 6

Project Number PT0507



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DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

SAFE HIGHWAY COALITIONS, PT0507

KEY PERSONNEL*

Key California Highway Patrol (CHP) personnel involved in the project include:

Executive Management

M. L. Brown, Commissioner
J. A. Farrow, Deputy Commissioner
Arthur Anderson, Assistant Commissioner, Field
K. P. Green, Assistant Commissioner, Staff

Project Staff

Project Director
H. A. Acevedo, Chief
Planning and Analysis Division

Project Evaluator
J. Whiteford, Captain
Commander, Special Projects Section

Project Manager
R. M. Nannini, Staff Services Manager II
Special Projects Section

Project Coordinators
M. Hoshida, Associate Transportation Planner
Special Projects Section

Project Fiscal Accounting Manager
L. A. Paolini, Chief
Administrative Services Division

Project Grant Coordinator
L. D. Sullivan, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Special Projects Section, Grants Management Unit

Project Artist
W. Kubo, Senior Graphic Artist
Departmental Training Division, Academy

*Personnel are listed as they were assigned on the project ending date August 31, 2006.

VASCO ROAD SAFE HIGHWAY COALITION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Jim Cahoon | Task Force Chair California Highway Patrol Contra Costa Area |
| Jeff Altman | Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences |
| Annette Beckstrand | Brentwood City Council |
| Stephen Bell | California Highway Patrol Dublin Area |
| Dannette Bentz | Office of Assembly Member Guy Houston |
| Craig Cheslog | Office of Senator Tom Torlakson |
| Jerry Fahy | Contra Costa County Department of Public Works |
| Sixto Fernandez | California Highway Patrol Special Projects Section |
| Greg Ferrero | California Highway Patrol Dublin Area |
| Tom Hansen | Brentwood Police Department |
| J. C. Hill | California Highway Patrol Contra Costa Area |
| Meriko Hoshida | California Highway Patrol Special Projects Section |
| Marie Kendrat-Neubauer | Oakland Resident |
| Kim King | Brentwood Police Department |
| Obaid Khan | Alameda County Department of Public Works |
| Stephen Kowalewski | Contra Costa County Department of Public Works |

**VASCO ROAD SAFE HIGHWAY COALITION TASK FORCE MEMBERS
(continued)**

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Cliff Kroeger | California Highway Patrol (Retired) Contra Costa Area |
| Walter MacVittie | East County Regional Planning Commission |
| Mark Mulgrew | California Highway Patrol Contra Costa Area |
| Jeanne Peterson | Brentwood Resident |
| David Piepho | Brentwood City Council |
| Mary Piepho | Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors |
| Brian Strock | Brentwood Police Department |
| Lisa Taboada | Brentwood Resident |
| Terri Tonge | Assembly Member Guy Houston's Office |
| Lisa Vasco | Brentwood Resident |
| Dave Wahl | East Contra Costa County Fire Department |
| Sam Weaver | Office of Congress Member Richard Pombo |
| Jim Williams | California Highway Patrol Dublin Area |
| Scott Wilson | Lawrence Livermore Laboratory |
| Scott Yox | California Highway Patrol Contra Costa Area |

CREDITS

This project is part of the California Traffic Safety Program and was made possible through the support of the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the State of California.

Personnel responsible for the successful project completion included C. J. Murphy, Director, OTS; M. Meadows, Assistant Director of Operations, OTS; K. Carroll, Operations Coordinator, OTS; and C. S. Gunter, Staff Services Manager I, Special Projects Section (SPS), Grants Management Unit, California Highway Patrol.

M. Hoshida, Associate Transportation Planner, SPS, coordinated the Safe Highway Coalitions Project.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the State of California, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or the Federal Highway Administration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SAFE HIGHWAY COALITIONS

CALIFORNIA

CORRIDOR 2 – VASCO ROAD SAFE HIGHWAY COALITION

| | |
|--|---|
| PROGRAM AREA(S) Police Traffic Services | PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS Reduction of reportable collisions through increased enforcement, establishment of a task force, and a public education campaign. |
| TYPE OF JURISDICTION Contra Costa and Alameda Counties | JURISDICTION SIZE Contra Costa County - 1,029,377 Alameda County - 1,501,303 |
| TARGETED POPULATIONS Motor Vehicle Drivers | |

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Identified traffic safety problems existing on Vasco Road in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties within the California Highway Patrol (CHP) Contra Costa and Dublin Areas. Unsafe speed and following too close were consistently the two primary collision factors. Accordingly, this project used the "corridor" approach to positively impact traffic safety. Through the use of a task force, problems were identified and solutions were developed and implemented. Additionally, enhanced enforcement efforts, coupled with a strong public awareness campaign, were directed toward corridor drivers.

PROJECT GOALS

1. **To reduce the number of fatal victims on high-collision highways for each corridor: Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006.**
Exact goals will be established after each corridor task force's initial meeting: Corridor 2 – by September 30, 2005.
Result: Not Accomplished. Corridor 2 quantifiable goal was established during the July through September 2005 reporting period. Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) data indicated a total of five fatal victims on the corridor. This is a 25 percent increase when compared to the average number of fatal victims for the same months during the January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, base period.
2. **To reduce the number of injured victims on high-collision highways for each corridor: Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006.**
Exact goals will be established after each corridor task force's initial meeting: Corridor 2 – by September 30, 2005.
Result: Accomplished. Corridor 2 quantifiable goal was established during the July through September 2005 reporting period. SWITRS data indicated a total of 25 injured victims on the corridor. This is a 32 percent increase when compared to the average number of injured victims for the same months during the January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, base period.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. **To select six corridors recommended by CHP Divisions, based upon input from CHP Areas, Caltrans Districts, and regional transportation planning agencies by July 31, 2006.**
Result: Accomplished. Corridor 2 was selected by the objective due date.
2. **To provide the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) with the required documentation of local support for each corridor.**
Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005.
Result: Accomplished. A letter of local support was sent to OTS dated August 9, 2005.
3. **To issue an operational plan for each corridor, establishing the method of operation and the policies applicable to carry out the grant program. Corridor 2 – by June 30, 2005.**
Result: Accomplished. An Operational Plan was issued on June 30, 2005.
4. **To conduct a language assessment of the project's service area to determine needs for materials in languages other than English for each corridor. Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005.**
Result: Accomplished. The language assessment indicated that English and Spanish were the two principal languages in the CHP Contra Costa and Dublin Areas. Therefore, educational materials were produced in English and Spanish.
5. **Task force members will be identified and the initial meeting for each corridor will be scheduled.**
Corridor 2 – by June 30, 2005.
Result: Accomplished. The Vasco Road Safety Task Force convened initially in December 2004 as a group of concerned citizens focusing on traffic issues on Vasco Road.
6. **To conduct a minimum of four task force/coalition meetings during each corridor's Implementation Phase.**
Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006.
Result: Accomplished. The Corridor 2 task force convened six times, one time prior and five times during the Implementation Phase.
7. **To identify, through each task force/coalition, at least four factors, including conditions and behaviors, negatively impacting traffic safety on the respective corridor, and to identify potential short- and/or long-term solutions to the factors.**
Corridor 2 – by February 28, 2006.
Result: Accomplished. The Corridor 2 task force identified four factors, including conditions and behaviors, negatively impacting traffic safety on the corridor, and identified potential short- and/or long-term solutions to the factors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

8. To implement at least two potential solutions per corridor within 12 months after each initial task force/coalition convenes. Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006.
Result: Accomplished. The Corridor 2 task force implemented two solutions within 12 months (by August 31, 2006) after its initial task force convened, and two additional solutions by October 1, 2006.
9. To deploy officers on project-funded overtime along appropriate routes to enforce traffic violations consistent with identified “top five” reportable collision primary factors during the Implementation Phase for each corridor. Corridor 2 – ending August 31, 2006.
Result: Accomplished. Corridor 2 expended its allocated officer overtime hours during its Implementation Phase.
10. To conduct a public awareness campaign to include:
 - a. Issuance of a news release announcing the kick-off of the project for each project. Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005.
Result: Not Accomplished. The CHP received direction from the Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency (BTH) not to issue a press conference nor a press release regarding this corridor.
 - b. To develop a project logo for each corridor. Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2005.
Result: Accomplished. Corridor 2 developed its logo for the project in the October through December 2004 reporting quarter. The logo was incorporated in educational materials, and imprinted on promotional items for the public education and awareness campaign element of the project.
 - c. To conduct at least one public affairs officer (PAO) presentation per month during each corridor’s Implementation Phase. Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006.
Result: Not accomplished. Corridor 2 was unable to provide presentations for the month of November 2005 due to the PAO’s schedule and other priority assignments. However, at least one presentation was accomplished for the months of September and December 2005; and January through August 2006.
11. To produce/air public service announcements (PSA) and paid media ads by December 31, 2007.
Result: Not applicable. Corridor 2 conducted its public education efforts through local events and safety presentations. No PSAs or paid media were provided for this corridor.
12. To describe and assess separately the effectiveness of “paid and donated” TV/radio airtime messages.
Result: Not applicable. Corridor 2 conducted its public education efforts through local events and safety presentations. No TV/radio airtime messages were provided for this corridor.
13. To describe and assess separately the effectiveness of “paid and donated” printed messages.
Result: Not applicable. Corridor 2 conducted its public education efforts through local events and safety presentations. No printed messages were provided for this corridor.
14. To develop localized educational materials and promotional items encouraging participation in project goals and objectives, educational presentations, etc. Items must include a traffic safety message, and if space is available, the OTS and BTH logos. Materials are to be distributed at appropriate venues for each corridor. Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006.
Result: Accomplished. Rack cards, pens, posters, and banners, were distributed at appropriate venues and events in support of the corridor. Public education activities by task force members and the CHP Contra Costa Area PAO were conducted during the corridor’s Implementation Phase.
15. To develop and include with each Final Report a *Safety Action Plan* addressing the traffic safety issues specific to each corridor. Corridor 2 – by June 30, 2007.
Result: Accomplished.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The project deployed special enforcement unit personnel from the CHP Contra Costa and Dublin Areas, and Brentwood Police Department. The deployments focused on enforcement efforts on collisions on Vasco Road. Safe driving at safe speeds and reducing speeds to accommodate inclement weather conditions were emphasized in the public awareness campaign.

RESULTS

Through the deployment of enhanced enforcement and a public education and awareness campaign, the project achieved a 32 percent decrease in injured victims; however, the project experienced an increase in fatal victims, from 4 to 5, during the Implementation Phase.

FUNDING

Section 164: \$2,251,324.00

CONTACT

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SAFE HIGHWAY COALITIONS PROJECT NUMBER PT0507

CORRIDOR 2 – VASCO ROAD SAFE HIGHWAY COALITION

INTRODUCTION

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), through the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), authorized the Department of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to develop and implement the Safe Highway Coalitions, project number PT0507. Funding for the entire project as of this Final Report was \$2,251,324.00.

The multidisciplinary corridor safety coalitions, each of which work together to gain an understanding of the problems on a particular corridor and then support and implement solutions, have proven to be a dynamic way of improving traffic safety, both in the short and long-term.

This report was prepared in accordance with the PT0507 Project Agreement established between the CHP, OTS, and NHTSA. The Project Agreement is contained in Annex A.

BACKGROUND

In California, with more than 4,100 killed and more than 300,000 injured annually on the state's roadways, reducing traffic fatalities and injuries is a challenge for the CHP whose responsibility is to enforce traffic laws on more than 150,000 miles of state and local public roadways. As a means to address this challenge, the CHP has adopted enforcement, education, and engineering efforts through the implementation of its safety corridor program. The safety corridor program has helped build collaborative partnerships to meet the challenge of maintaining traffic safety on California roadways. The CHP has found that building partnerships is vital because drivers cross jurisdictions, and no single entity working alone can solve all traffic safety problems or address all traffic safety needs. With the implementation of the safety corridor program in 1992, the CHP has been able to target road segments or corridors, with a high number of traffic collisions, throughout the state which have benefited significantly from this collaborative approach.

PROJECT GOALS

GOALS:

1. **To reduce the number of fatal victims on high-collision highways for each corridor.**
 - **Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006**

Exact goals will be established after each corridor task force's initial meeting.

- **Corridor 2 – by September 30, 2005**

Result: Accomplished. Corridor 2 quantifiable goal was established during the July through September 2005 reporting period. The goal was to reduce the number of fatal victims on Corridor 2, from 4 to 3 as compared to the average number, 4, that occurred during the same months from January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, by August 31, 2006.

2. **To reduce the number of injured victims on high-collision highways for each corridor.**

- **Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006**

Exact goals will be established after each corridor task force's initial meeting.

- **Corridor 2 – by September 30, 2005**

Result: Accomplished. Corridor 2 quantifiable goal was established during the July through September 2005 reporting period. The goal was to reduce the number of injured victims on Corridor 2, from 37 to 35 as compared to the average number, 37, which occurred during the same months from January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, by August 31, 2006.

| Corridor 2 | | |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Corridor to be identified by: 7-31-06 | | |
| Goal to be quantified by: 9-30-05 | | |
| Quantified goal statements: | | |
| <p>Goal 1 To reduce the number of fatal victims on Corridor 2 from 4 to 3 as compared to the average number, 4, that occurred during the same months from January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, by August 31, 2006.</p> <p>Goal 2 To reduce the number of injured victims on Corridor 2 from 37 to 35 as compared to the average number, 37, that occurred during the same months from January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, by August 31, 2006.</p> | | |
| Corridor Description: Vasco Road in Alameda County, from the south city limits of Livermore to Walnut Boulevard in Contra Costa County. | | |
| Reporting Period 2005/2006 | Actual | |
| | Fatal Victims | Injured Victims |
| September 2005 | 0 | 1 |
| October 2005 | 1 | 2 |
| November 2005 | 0 | 3 |
| December 2005 | 0 | 5 |
| January 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| February 2006 | 0 | 0 |
| March 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| April 2006 | 0 | 0 |
| May 2006 | 0 | 1 |
| June 2006 | 0 | 3 |
| July 2006 | 0 | 4 |
| August 2006 | 4 | 4 |
| To Date Totals | 5 | 25 |
| Average # of Fatalities/ Injuries During the Base Period Experienced for the Same Months | 4 | 37 |
| To Date Total +/- Difference from Base | +1 | -12 |
| To Date Totals % Difference from Base | +25% | -32% |
| Average # of Fatalities/ Injuries During the Base Period: January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004 | 4 | 37 |

Progress:

Goal 1: Not accomplished. Statewide Integrated Traffic Records Systems (SWITRS) data for the period of September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006, indicated a total of five fatal victims on the corridor. This is a 25 percent increase when compared to the average number of fatal victims for the same months during the January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, base period.

Goal 2: Accomplished. SWITRS data for the period of September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006, indicated a total of 25 injured victims on the corridor. This is a 32 percent decrease when compared to the average number of injured victims for the same months during the January 1, 2002, through December 31, 2004, base period.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. **To select six corridors recommended by CHP Divisions, based upon input from CHP Areas, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Districts, and regional transportation planning agencies by July 31, 2006.**

Progress: Accomplished. Corridor 2 was selected by the objective due date.

2. **To provide the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) with the required documentation of local support for each corridor.**

- **Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005**

Progress: Accomplished. The letter of local support from the County of Alameda, Board of Supervisors was sent to OTS, dated August 9, 2005.

3. **To issue an operational plan for each corridor, establishing the method of operation and the policies applicable to carry out the grant program.**

- **Corridor 2 – by June 30, 2005**

Result: Accomplished. The operational plan was issued by June 30, 2005.

4. **To conduct a language assessment of the project's service area to determine needs for materials in languages other than English for each corridor.**

- **Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005**

Progress: Accomplished. The language assessment indicated that English and Spanish were the two principle languages in the Contra Costa and Dublin Areas. Therefore, educational materials were produced in English and Spanish.

5. **Task force members will be identified and the initial meeting for each corridor will be scheduled.**

- **Corridor 2 – by June 30, 2005**

Progress: Accomplished. The Vasco Road Safety Task Force initially convened in December 2004 focusing on traffic safety issues on Vasco Road.

6. **To conduct a minimum of four task force/coalition meetings during each corridor's Implementation Phase.**

- **Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006**

Corridor 2 Task Force/Coalition Meetings

| Time Frame | Task Force/Coalition Meeting Date(s)/Location(s) |
|-------------------|---|
| December 2004 | 12-2004: Initial task force meeting in Brentwood. |
| September 2005 | 9-28-05: Task force meeting in Brentwood. |
| November 2005 | 11-3-05: Task force meeting in Brentwood. |
| April 2006 | 4-26-06: Task force meeting in Brentwood. |
| July 2006 | 7-26-06: Task force meeting in Brentwood. |
| August 2006 | 8-18-06: Task force meeting in Brentwood. |

Progress: Accomplished. The Corridor 2 task force convened one time prior to its Implementation Phase. The task force met five times during its Implementation Phase.

7. **To identify, through each task force/coalition, at least four factors, including conditions and behaviors, negatively impacting traffic safety on the respective corridor, and to identify potential short- and/or long-term solutions to the factors.**

- **Corridor 2 – by February 28, 2006**

Corridor 2
Identified Conditions/Behaviors
(to be implemented by February 28, 2006)

| Condition/Behavior | Short- and/or Long-Term Solution | Date Identified |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. Speeding Drivers | Provide enhanced enforcement. Establish the corridor as a safety enhancement double-fine zone (SEDFZ). | 9-1-05 |
| 2. Passing in "no passing" areas. | Install a center median. | 10-1-05 |
| 3. High incidence of head-on collisions. | Install a center median. | 10-1-05 |
| 4. Increased traffic volumes at the Camino Diablo intersection have created long traffic queues during commute hours. | Add exclusive right-turn only lanes on Vasco Road. | 10-1-05 |

Progress: Accomplished. The Corridor 2 task force identified four factors, including conditions and behaviors, negatively impacting traffic safety on the corridor, and identified potential short-and/or long-term solutions to the factors.

8. To implement at least two potential solutions per corridor within 12 months after each initial task force/coalition convenes.

- **Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006**

Corridor 2
Potential Solution Implementation
(to be implemented by March 31, 2006)

| Identified Condition/Behavior | Potential Solution | Implementation Date |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Speeding Drivers | Provide enhanced enforcement. Establish the corridor as a SEDFZ. | Grant-funded enforcement was in place from 9-1-05 through 8-31-06. SEDFZ legislation was signed by the Governor on 8-29-06. |
| 2. Passing in "no passing" areas. | Install a center median. | Installation of 1,200 vertical delineators (instead of a solid center median) was completed 10-1-05. |
| 3. High incidence of head-on collisions. | Install a center median. | Installation of 1,200 vertical delineators (instead of a solid center median) was completed 10-1-05. |
| 4. Increased traffic volumes at the Camino Diablo intersection have created long traffic queues during commute hours. | Add exclusive right-turn lanes on Vasco Road. | Final intersection improvements were completed in late Spring 2005. |

Progress: Accomplished. The Corridor 2 task force implemented two solutions within 12 months (by August 31, 2006) after its initial task force convened, and two additional solutions by October 1, 2006.

9. **To deploy officers on project-funded overtime along appropriate routes to enforce traffic violations consistent with the identified "top five" reportable collision primary collision factors (PCFs) during the Implementation Phase for each corridor.**
 - **Corridor 2 – ending August 31, 2006**

Corridor 2 - Officer Overtime Deployment and Use

| Enhanced Enforcement Hours Allocated Total 2,444 | Overtime Hours Used Per Month | | | | | | Total Hours Used |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|
| 2005 | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | | | 2,467.5 |
| | 184.5 | 144.5 | 254.5 | 66.5 | | | |
| 2006 | Jan. | Feb. | March | April | May | June | |
| | 160 | 70 | 133 | 127.5 | 220.5 | 334.5 | |
| | July | Aug. | | | | | |
| | 319 | 453 | | | | | |

Progress: Accomplished. Corridor 2 deployed its entire allocated officer overtime hours during its Implementation Phase.

10. To conduct a public awareness campaign to include:

a. Issuance of a news release announcing the kick-off of the project for each corridor.

- Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005

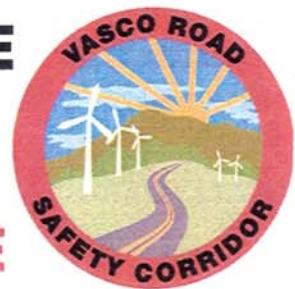
Progress: Not accomplished. The CHP received direction from the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency to not issue a press release or hold a press conference regarding this corridor.

b. To develop a project logo for each corridor.

- Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2005

Progress: Accomplished. Corridor 2 developed its logo for the project during the October through December 2004 reporting quarter. The logo was incorporated in educational materials, and imprinted on promotional items for the public education and awareness campaign element of the project.

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c. To conduct at least one public affairs officer (PAO) presentation per month during each corridor's Implementation Phase.

- Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006

**PAO PRESENTATIONS
Corridor 2**

| Month | Location | Number of Attendees |
|--------------------|--|----------------------------|
| September 17, 2005 | Oakley Almond Festival | 400+ Attendees |
| October 8, 2005 | Bethel Island Safety Faire Bethel Island | 250+ Attendees |
| October 28, 2005 | Garin Elementary School Harvest Safety Carnival Brentwood | 300+ Attendees |
| December 19, 2005 | Holiday Parade and Faire Brentwood | 200+ Attendees |
| January 19, 2006 | Liberty High School Drivers Education Classes | 60 Attendees |
| February 4, 2006 | City of Antioch Safety Fair | 350+ Attendees |
| March 18, 2006 | Deer Valley High School (Antioch) Child Safety Fair | 200+ Attendees |
| April 27, 2006 | Liberty High School | 100 Attendees |
| May 19-20, 2006 | Discovery Bay Boat Show | 500+ Attendees |
| June 3, 2006 | Antioch Church Family Safety Fair | 400+ Attendees |
| July 7-9, 2006 | Brentwood Cornfest | 5,000+ Attendees |
| August 1, 2006 | National Night Out in Martinez, Bay Point, Walnut Creek, and Alamo | 150 Attendees |

Result: Not accomplished. Corridor 2 was unable to provide presentations for the month of November 2005 due to the PAO's schedule and other priority assignments. However, at least one presentation was accomplished for the months of September, October, and December 2005; and January through August 2006.

11. **To produce/air public service announcements (PSA) and paid media ads by December 31, 2007.**

Result: Not applicable. Corridor 2 conducted its public education efforts through local events and safety presentations. No PSAs or paid media were provided for this corridor.

12. **To describe and assess separately the effectiveness of "paid and donated" TV/radio airtime messages by providing:**
- a. **Number of PSAs produced.**
 - b. **Subject of each PSA.**
 - c. **Number of airings for each PSA.**
 - d. **Total size of audience reached.**
 - e. **Total cost or donated value.**

Result: Not applicable. Corridor 2 conducted its public education efforts through local events and safety presentations. No PSAs or paid media were provided for this corridor.

13. To describe and assess separately the effectiveness of “paid and donated” printed messages by providing:

- a. Number of messages produced.**
- b. Subject of each message.**
- c. Number of printings for each message.**
- d. Total size of audience reached.**
- e. Total cost or donated value.**

Result: Not applicable. Corridor 2 conducted its public education efforts through local events and safety presentations. No PSAs or paid media were provided for this corridor.

14. To develop localized educational materials and promotional items encouraging participation in project goals and objectives, educational presentations, etc. Items must include a traffic safety message, and if space is available, the OTS and BTH logos. Materials are to be distributed at appropriate venues for each corridor.¹

- Corridor 2 – by August 31, 2006**

Result: Accomplished. Rack cards, pens, posters, and banners, purchased with grant funds were distributed at appropriate venues and events in support of the corridor. Public education activities by task force members and the Contra Costa Area PAO were conducted during the corridor’s Implementation Phase.

15. To develop and include with each Final Report a *Safety Action Plan* addressing the traffic safety issues specific to each corridor.

- Corridor 2 – by June 30, 2007**

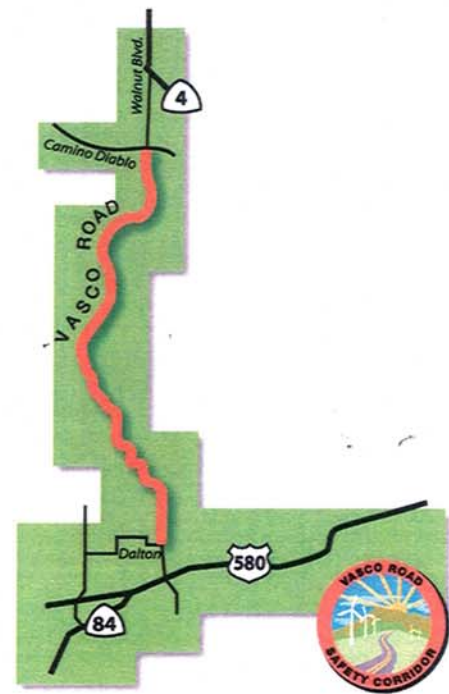
| Corridor | Due Date | Date Developed | Date Submitted to GMU |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 | 6-30-07 | 6-30-07 | 6-30-07 |

Result: On schedule. Corridor 2 Final Report was completed and submitted to Grants Management Unit (GMU) by June 30, 2007. The Safety Action Plan is contained in Annex C.

¹ Some of the incentive and educational items could include key rings, bumper stickers, posters, badges, stickers, T-shirts, hats, poster and essay contests, wristbands, pledges, books, press kits, or pamphlets. The traffic safety message will be project-related. Planned venues for distribution include safety presentations, community events, CHP informational booths, and other appropriate venues.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Vasco Road Safety Corridor, for the most part, is a two lane 13-mile rural road located in Contra Costa and Alameda County. It is a connecting route between the cities of Livermore and Brentwood and is used by drivers commuting to and from work in Pleasanton, the Silicon Valley, and the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Most sections of the corridor are two lanes, with no center divider and narrow, unpaved shoulders. Traffic volumes are between 19,000 and 24,000 vehicles per day with a peak volume of about 1,900 an hour. Many of the collisions are caused by excessive speed and following too closely. Head-on collisions, caused by drivers who pass illegally in no passing zones, usually result in either death or severe injury. These collisions have generated the most passionate public response for the need for additional lanes and a center median on Vasco Road.



The corridor is a prime example of a rural road in transition as suburban developments encroach on rural areas. Being located in one of the fastest growing counties in California, any road improvements are eroded by the continuing growth in traffic and any substantive improvements would be difficult and expensive.

In 2003, Contra Costa County hired a private civil engineering firm, Nolte Associates, to assess the roadway. Nolte Associates compared the collision rate of Vasco Road to Caltrans data for other conventional two-lane rural highway with a flat terrain and a design speed of greater than 55 miles per hour. Their comparison showed that accident rate on Vasco Road was actually lower than the statewide average rate.

Vasco Road Collision Rate Compared to Statewide Average.

| Period | # of Collisions | Actual Collision Rate | | | | Statewide Average Rate* | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|-------|------|-------------------------|------------|-------|------|
| | | Fatal (F) | Injury (I) | F + I | All | Fatal (F) | Injury (I) | F + I | All |
| 1999-2003 | 180 | 0.01 | 0.14 | 0.16 | 0.49 | 0.04 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.92 |
| 1999 | 30 | 0.00 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.41 | 0.04 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.92 |
| 2000 | 48 | 0.01 | 0.24 | 0.25 | 0.65 | 0.04 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.92 |
| 2001 | 37 | 0.01 | 0.24 | 0.25 | 0.50 | 0.04 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.92 |
| 2002 | 36 | 0.01 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.49 | 0.04 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.92 |
| 2003 | 29 | 0.03 | 0.13 | 0.16 | 0.39 | 0.04 | 0.41 | 0.45 | 0.92 |

*Statewide data obtained from the 2001 Collision Data on California State Highways by Caltrans, assuming conventional two-lane rural highway with flat terrain and a design speed of greater than 55 mph.

In evaluating possible options, Nolte Associates found that installing a barrier would require the entire roadway to be widened to meet design standards for sight distance and emergency access. Since the county's budget for Vasco Road improvements was only \$1.5 million (a loan from the City of Brentwood), which was inadequate funding for a concrete median, the firm recommended the installation of rumble strips in the center and shoulders, along with center road delineators in certain sections of Vasco Road as a short-term solution. Another recommendation was to increase the capacity around the signalized intersection of Vasco and Camino Diablo Roads. Because of the high volume of traffic at this intersection, rear-end collisions were a common occurrence. An extra lane added in each direction would increase the capacity of the intersection and reduce congestion.

In December 2004, the Vasco Road Safe Highway Coalition Task Force convened to address its traffic safety concerns on the roadway. Members of the task force included concerned citizens of Oakley and Brentwood; CHP Dublin and Contra Costa Areas; the Brentwood Police Department; Contra Costa County Department of Public Works; East Contra Costa Planning Commission; Contra Costa County Supervisor Mary Piepho; Brentwood City Councilmember Annette Beckstrand; East Contra Costa County Fire Department; Lawrence Livermore Laboratory; Mr. Jeff Altman (who was also a member of the Concerned Residents At Vasco (also known as CRAVE, an organization created as a result of his wife's death of Vasco Road in 2003); and representatives from the offices of State Assembly Member Guy Houston, Congress Member Richard Pombo, and State Senate Member Tom Torlakson.

METHODOLOGY/CHRONOLOGY

The following provides a chronological description of project activities as reflected in the Project Agreement:

Phase I – Program Preparation (October 1, 2004, through December 31, 2006) Corridor 2 (April 1, 2005, through August 31, 2005)

During this phase, the most recent SWITRS data was used to compile necessary statistics to evaluate collisions on the corridor. Staff from Planning and Analysis Division, Special Projects Section, met with the CHP Contra Costa Area in late 2004 to discuss the format, goals, and objectives of the project. At this meeting, task force members were identified and invited to participate on the task force. The project logo was developed.

Phase II – Implementation (April 1, 2005, through December 31, 2007) Corridor 2 (September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006)

The task force convened for the first time in December 2004 and met five additional times to identify, discuss, and implement recommendations for improvements to traffic safety. Discussions on the format, goals, and objectives of the grant were ongoing. A contract with the Brentwood Police Department was executed to provide for their participation in enforcement activities within their jurisdiction in areas adjacent to Vasco Road. Hours were deployed for overtime enforcement.

**Phase III – Data Gathering and Analysis (Throughout project period)
Corridor 2 (September 1, 2006, through April 30, 2006)**

Data was gathered throughout the project period on activities and results to support the quarterlies and final report. The data was used to determine progress toward the accomplishment of objectives and achievement of the project goal.

**Phase IV – Final Report and Executive Summary (October 1, 2008, through
November 30, 2008)
Corridor 2 (June 30, 2007)**

Collision, citation, and victim statistical information was collected. Final SWITRS data was collected and included in this Final Report. A draft of the Final Report was made available for review by task force members before the final draft was submitted to Planning and Analysis Division, Special Projects Section, Grants Management Unit.

The Final Report is due to OTS by November 30, 2008.

PROBLEMS

No significant problems were encountered.

RESULTS

The Vasco Road Safety Corridor is an excellent example of the “corridor” approach to rectify identified problems within a specific segment of roadway. The task force was made up of highly motivated individuals who wanted to improve traffic safety on the corridor. The task force made concerted and creative efforts to include different segments of the community (and by its involvement, heighten its awareness of the corridor). Some of the activities/accomplishments included:

- Having a Liberty High School student (in Brentwood) design the project logo.
- Asking a Liberty High School video production class to produce a public service traffic safety video. The video was aired on a local cable channel.
- Soliciting donations from local businesses to purchase computer equipment needed for production of the video for the high school.
- Displaying banners (purchased with grant funds) printed with the project logo and slogan by local retail businesses.



- Asking a local coffee shop to donate paper cup sleeves on which stickers with the logo and slogan were adhered.
- Asking a local theater to display the project logo and slogan on their movie screens before the feature movie.
- Installing speed feedback signs. Contra Costa County purchased one sign, and a second was donated by the 3M Company.
- Establishing a CHP substation. In November 2005, the Brentwood Police Department provided office space for a CHP substation in its new facility on Brentwood Boulevard. Six CHP officers were assigned to the substation. The location of the substation in Brentwood reduced the response time of CHP officers by 30 to 40 minutes to incidents occurring in east Contra Costa County.

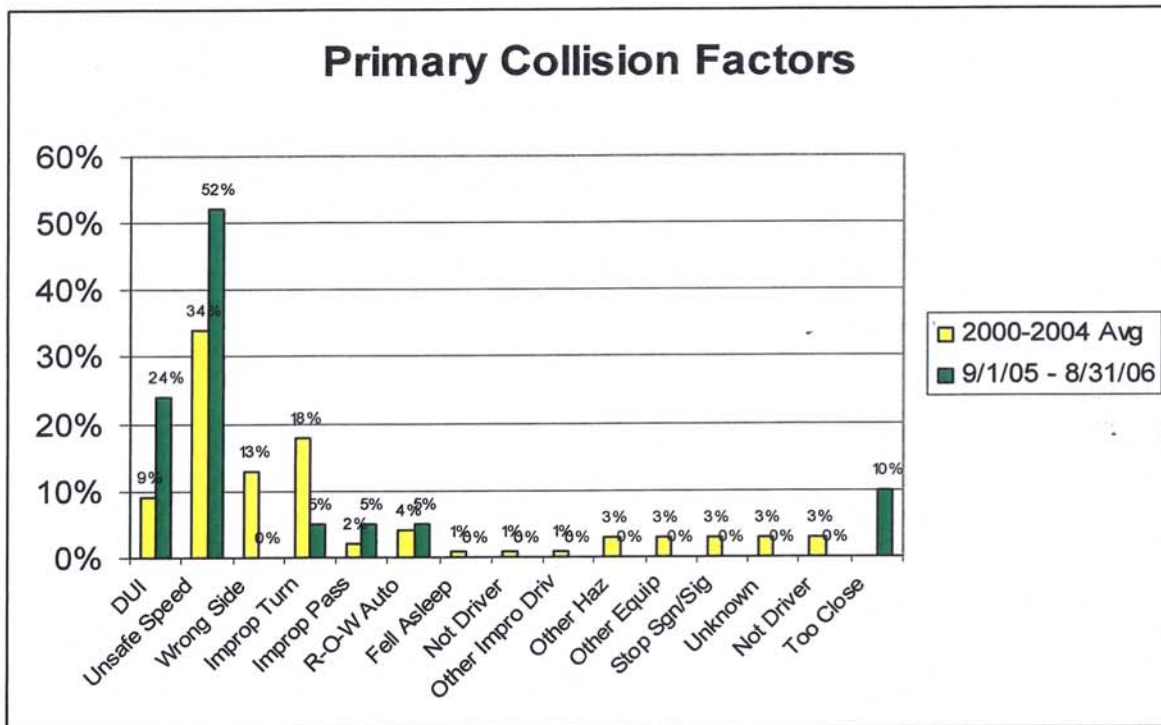
During the Implementation Phase, over 2,400 overtime hours were deployed on the corridor, and while on overtime, over 2,400 citations were issued by the participating law enforcement agencies. In September 2005, rumble strips and centerline delineators were installed by the Alameda and Contra Costa County Public Works Departments on sections of Vasco Road to deter illegal passing. These measures prevented some illegal passing but more aggressive drivers continued to pass in no passing zones as was evidenced by the number of delineators that were knocked over and needed replacement.

During the project Implementation Phase, there were 25 injured victims on Vasco Road, which was a 32 percent decrease when compared to the 2002 through 2004 base period average of 37 injured victims. A total of five fatal victims occurred on Vasco Road, which was an increase of one from the 2002 through 2004 base period average.



A comparison of primary collision factors (PCF) of the five years prior, with PCFs during the project Implementation Phase, indicates the following significant differences:

- 16 percent increase in unsafe speed;
- 15 percent increase in driving-under-the-influence;
- 13 percent increase in following too close;
- 13 percent decrease in driving on the wrong side;
- 13 percent decrease in improper turning.



August 14, 2006, on Vasco Road

There had been only one fatal victim on the safety corridor during the Implementation Phase until August 14, 2006, when four construction workers headed for a job site were involved in a head-on collision. The workers' vehicle crossed over a double-yellow line and collided with an oncoming vehicle. All four workers were killed.

After this collision, interest arose again for a center median. Senator Tom Torlakson authored a bill designating Vasco Road a safety

enhanced double-fine zone (SEDFZ). The bill was approved by the Legislature and the Governor, and became effective January 1, 2007. It will remain in effect until December 31, 2010.

Senator Torlakson is now researching funding for the center median and other long-term safety solutions. Cost of the installation of a permanent median and widening Vasco Road to four lanes is estimated to be \$100 to \$200 million.

Beyond funding issues, the counties (Alameda and Contra Costa), cities (Brentwood, Antioch, and Oakley), and other involved government agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Game, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service face the challenge of combining their approach in handling traffic issues on their rural roads.

The task force, reinvigorated by the enactment of the SEDFZ on Vasco Road, has continued to meet after the end of the grant Implementation Phase due to its strong commitment in making Vasco Road a safer road to travel.



COST EFFECTIVENESS

According to the 2005 Annual Report of Fatal and Injury Motor Vehicle Traffic Collisions (based on data provided by the United States Department of Transportation), the cost of one traffic collision fatality is \$3,247,000. For injury collisions, the economic cost ranges from \$24,000 to \$225,000 per victim, depending on injury severity. Accordingly, any reduction in fatal and injury collisions provides societal and economic benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Task force members should continue to work together to promote highway safety through multi-agency enforcement, and by promoting public awareness and education campaigns. committed to making Vasco Road a safer road.

The CHP Contra Costa and Dublin Areas should continue to use overtime hours from existing departmental statewide grants on the safety corridor.

The task force members agreed to continue to work together for the proactive development, implementation, and evaluation of traffic safety in and around the corridor site.

Annex A

Safe Highway Coalitions PT0507 Project Agreement



State of California
Business, Transportation & Housing Agency

PROJECT NUMBER
PT0507

**OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY
GRANT AGREEMENT**

PAGE 1 (To be completed by applicant Agency)

1. PROJECT TITLE
SAFE HIGHWAY COALITIONS

2. NAME OF APPLICANT AGENCY
CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL (CHP)

3. AGENCY UNIT TO HANDLE PROJECT
PLANNING AND ANALYSIS DIVISION (PAD)

4. PROJECT PERIOD
Month - Day - Year

From: **10-1-04**

To: **9-30-08**

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Summarize the project plan covering the objectives, method of procedures, evaluation, and end product in approximately 100 words. Space is limited to six lines.)

The CHP will conduct a project to reduce vehicle-related fatalities and injuries along six high-collision highway (corridor) segments (to be determined upon site selection). This project includes both a public education and awareness campaign and enhanced enforcement directed at reducing fatalities and injuries on the selected corridors. Local coalitions/task forces comprised of interested parties from local, regional, state, and/or federal organizations and agencies, will be formed to address the issues on each corridor by comprehensively evaluating both causes and possible remedies. The coalitions/task forces will establish specific goals for fatality and injury reduction on each of the six corridors and develop *Safety Action Plans* for implementing short- and/or long-term solutions individually tailored to each. Fixed-wing aircraft and road patrol enforcement will be deployed on overtime along each corridor. The focus of the enforcement efforts will be on those violations which most commonly cause collisions on the identified corridors, or which may aggravate the consequences of those collisions, such as speeding and right-of-way violations.

6. FEDERAL FUNDS ALLOCATED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT SHALL NOT EXCEED: **\$2,251,324.00**

7. APPROVAL SIGNATURES

A. PROJECT DIRECTOR

NAME: **L. D. DUMMER** PHONE: (916) 657-4098

TITLE: **Assistant Chief** FAX: (916) 657-4087

ADDRESS: 2555 First Avenue
Sacramento, California 95818-2696

E-MAIL: **ldummer@chp.ca.gov**

(Signature)

(Date)

B. AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL OF APPLICANT AGENCY

NAME: **K. P. GREEN** PHONE: (916) 657-7194

TITLE: **Assistant Commissioner, Staff** FAX: (916) 657-7324

ADDRESS: 2555 First Avenue
Sacramento, California 95818-2696

E-MAIL: **kgreen@chp.ca.gov**

(Signature)

(Date)

C. FISCAL OR ACCOUNTING OFFICIAL

NAME: **S. M. CAHILL** PHONE: (916) 375-2733

TITLE: **Commander** FAX: (916) 375-2752

ADDRESS: 860 Stillwater Road
West Sacramento, California 95605-1649

E-MAIL: **scahill@chp.ca.gov**

(Signature)

(Date)

D. OFFICE AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS

NAME: **Accounting Section**

ADDRESS: P. O. Box 942900
Sacramento, California 94298-2900

SCHEDULE A

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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BACKGROUND

A. General Characteristics

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is an operating department within the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BTH). Its authority and responsibilities are established in the California Vehicle Code. The overall purpose of the Department as a principal criminal justice agency is to ensure safety, security, and service to the public. This is accomplished through:

- Collision Prevention. To minimize the loss of life, personal injury, and property damage resulting from traffic collisions.
- Emergency Incident/Traffic Management. Minimizing exposure of the public to unsafe conditions resulting from emergency incidents, impediments, and congestion.
- Law Enforcement. To minimize crime.
- Assistance. To assist other public agencies.
- Services. To maximize service to the public in need of aid or information.

B. Streets and Highways

The Department is responsible for over 104,000 miles of highway. Of these, approximately 14,000 miles are state highways¹ and 90,000 miles are county roads. In 2002, approximately 231 billion miles were driven on CHP-patrolled highways.

C. Operating Department

The organizational structure of the CHP divides the state into eight field Divisions. Within these eight field Divisions are commercial vehicle inspection facilities; communications centers; and over 100 Area offices, substations, and resident posts. In addition to the field Divisions, there are nine Headquarters Divisions and four Headquarters Offices which fall under the direction of the Commissioner or the Assistant Commissioners, Field and Staff. The CHP Headquarters is located in Sacramento. For fiscal year 2003/2004, the CHP had over 10,000 authorized personnel positions, of which approximately 7,000 are uniformed and 3,000 are non-uniformed. The CHP has responsibility for providing 24-hour-a-day services every day of the year for approximately 34 million residents of the State of California and approximately 28 million motor vehicles.

¹ These include Interstate Routes, United States Routes, and State Routes.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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The CHP will be the Department directly responsible for conducting the project. Special Projects Section (SPS), Planning and Analysis Division (PAD), will be the Office of Primary Interest (OPI) for the project.

D. Existing System

Road patrol officers are deployed on major highway systems within the Department's jurisdiction according to past traffic collision experience and future projections. Traffic safety public information and education efforts are conducted by assigned CHP officers as resources permit. Additionally, bilingual officers work with non-English-speaking communities to encourage their involvement with traffic safety issues.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2002, there were 2,275 fatal, 72,380 injury, and 152,864 property-damage-only collisions within the CHP's jurisdiction. As a result, 2,628 persons were killed and 113,177 were injured.

Safer highways in California are a vital concern for all travelers in the state. The CHP is continuously investigating ways to contribute to the state's safer roadways by improving the highway environment and changing driver behavior. While several public safety agencies have an interest or obligation to enhance traffic safety on state roadways, the CHP realizes that each agency tends to function independently within its area of responsibility on potential issues of concern. The CHP will select four high-collision highway segments as project corridors. The process for the selection of the highway segments will involve gathering statistical information from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records Systems (SWITRS), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), CHP Area offices, as well as soliciting support from local stakeholders who will be potential coalition/task force members.

Past projects indicate applying the task force approach composed of members representing the CHP, allied agencies, elected officials, local agencies, and the private sector, to implement short- and/or long-term changes to improve a selected high-collision segment of a highway has been successful. The CHP received the 2001 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Policing for its task force/corridor projects.

ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

Since October 2000, the CHP has conducted two projects, Corridor Safety Project Expansion, Phase VII, PT0140, which began October 1, 2000, and ends September 30, 2004; and Corridor Safety Project Expansion, Phase VIII, PT0310, which began October 1, 2002, and ends September 30, 2004. The "corridor" approach has promoted proactive and positive results. The projects have been effective in isolating and addressing traffic safety issues. Applying the "corridor" approach permits task forces to focus limited resources on specific locations, rather than conducting a statewide campaign.

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By September 30, 2004, PT0140 and PT0310 will have been completed, and there is no indication that requests for assistance will diminish. Therefore, even though the evaluation periods for PT0140 and PT0310 end on September 30, 2004, it is expedient to have a procedure in place that allows additional projects to be chosen in Federal Fiscal Year 2004/2005.

The multidisciplinary corridor safety task forces, each of which works together to gain understanding of the problems on a particular corridor and then support and implement solutions, have proven to be a dynamic way of improving traffic safety, both in the short-and long-term, on previous corridors. Staff has streamlined processes and drawn upon past experience from eight corridor projects, involving 35 task forces. This project will apply the "corridor" approach to four corridors identified by high collision statistics.

PROJECT GOALS

1. To reduce the number of fatal victims on high-collision highways for each corridor.

- Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2006
- Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2006
- Corridor 3 – by July 31, 2006
- Corridor 4 – by October 31, 2006
- Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2007
- Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2007

Exact goals will be established after each corridor task force's initial meeting.

- Corridor 1 - by April 30, 2005
- Corridor 2 - by September 30, 2005
- Corridor 3 – by August 31, 2005
- Corridor 4 – by November 30, 2005
- Corridor 5 - by May 31, 2006
- Corridor 6 - by January 31, 2007

2. To reduce the number of injured victims on high-collision highways for each corridor.

- Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2006
- Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2006
- Corridor 3 – by July 31, 2006
- Corridor 4 – by October 31, 2006
- Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2007
- Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2007

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Exact goals will be established after each corridor task force's initial meeting.

- Corridor 1 - by April 30, 2005
- Corridor 2 - by September 30, 2005
- Corridor 3 - by August 31, 2005
- Corridor 4 - by November 30, 2005
- Corridor 5 - by May 31, 2006
- Corridor 6 - by January 31, 2007

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To select six corridors recommended by CHP Divisions, based upon input from CHP Areas, Caltrans Districts, and regional transportation planning agencies by July 31, 2006.
2. To provide the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) with the required documentation of local support² for each corridor.
 - Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2005
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2005
 - Corridor 3 - by July 31, 2005
 - Corridor 4 - by October 31, 2005
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2006
3. To issue an operational plan³ for each corridor, establishing the method of operation and the policies applicable to carry out the grant program.
 - Corridor 1 - by December 31, 2004
 - Corridor 2 - by June 30, 2005
 - Corridor 3 - by June 30, 2005
 - Corridor 4 - by September 30, 2005
 - Corridor 5 - by February 28, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by October 31, 2006

² Projects designated by OTS as "for local benefit" require documentation of "consent and acceptance" by representatives of local government. For "Corridor" projects, such documentation will be provided as soon as practical after selection of the roadways to be involved in the project.

³ The operational plan will contain a strategic distribution of allocated overtime hours.

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4. To conduct a language assessment of the project's service area to determine needs for materials in languages other than English for each corridor.⁴
 - Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2005
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2005
 - Corridor 3 - by July 31, 2005
 - Corridor 4 - by October 31, 2005
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2006
5. Task force members will be identified and the initial meeting for each corridor will be scheduled.
 - Corridor 1 - by January 31, 2005
 - Corridor 2 - by June 30, 2005
 - Corridor 3 - by May 31, 2005
 - Corridor 4 - by August 31, 2005
 - Corridor 5 - by February 28, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by October 31, 2006
6. To conduct a minimum of four task force/coalition meetings during each corridor's Implementation Phase.
 - Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2006
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2006
 - Corridor 3 - by July 31, 2006
 - Corridor 4 - by October 31, 2006
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2007
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2007
7. To identify, through each task force/coalition, at least four factors, including conditions and behaviors, negatively impacting traffic safety on the respective corridor, and to identify potential short- and/or long-term solutions to the factors.
 - Corridor 1 - by September 30, 2005
 - Corridor 2 - by February 28, 2006
 - Corridor 3 - by January 31, 2006
 - Corridor 4 - by April 30, 2006
 - Corridor 5 - by October 31, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by June 30, 2007

⁴ Project materials will accommodate identified needs.

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8. To implement at least two potential solutions per corridor within 12 months after each initial task force/coalition convenes.
 - Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2006
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2006
 - Corridor 3 - by July 31, 2006
 - Corridor 4 - by October 31, 2006
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2007
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2007
9. To deploy officers on project-funded overtime along appropriate routes to enforce traffic violations consistent with the identified "top five" reportable collision primary collision factors (PCFs) during the Implementation Phase for each corridor.
 - Corridor 1 - ending March 31, 2006
 - Corridor 2 - ending August 31, 2006
 - Corridor 3 - ending July 31, 2006
 - Corridor 4 - ending October 31, 2006
 - Corridor 5 - ending April 30, 2007
 - Corridor 6 - ending December 31, 2007
10. To conduct a public awareness campaign to include:
 - a. Issuance of a news release announcing the kick-off of the project for each corridor.
 - Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2005
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2005
 - Corridor 3 - by July 31, 2005
 - Corridor 4 - by October 31, 2005
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2006

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- b. To develop a project logo for each corridor.⁵
- Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2005
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2005
 - Corridor 3 – by July 31, 2005
 - Corridor 4 – by October 31, 2005
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2006
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2006
- c. To conduct at least one public affairs officer (PAO) presentation per month during each corridor's Implementation Phase.
- Corridor 1 - April 1, 2005, through March 31, 2006
 - Corridor 2 - September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006
 - Corridor 3 – August 1, 2005, through July 31, 2006
 - Corridor 4 – November 1, 2005, through October 31, 2006
 - Corridor 5 - May 1, 2006, through April 30, 2007
 - Corridor 6 - January 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007
11. To produce/air public service announcements (PSAs) and paid media ads by December 31, 2007.
12. To describe and assess separately the effectiveness of “paid and donated” TV/radio airtime messages by providing:
- a. Number of PSAs produced.
 - b. Subject of each PSA.
 - c. Number of airings for each PSA.
 - d. Total size of audience reached.
 - e. Total cost or donated value.
13. To describe and assess separately the effectiveness of “paid and donated” printed messages by providing:
- a. Number of messages produced.
 - b. Subject of each message.
 - c. Number of printings for each message.
 - d. Total size of audience reached.
 - e. Total cost or donated value.

⁵ The project logo will be used on appropriate project materials.

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14. To develop localized educational materials and promotional items encouraging participation in project goals and objectives, educational presentations, etc. Items must include a traffic safety message, and if space is available, the OTS and BTH logos. Materials are to be distributed at appropriate venues for each corridor.⁶
- Corridor 1 - by March 31, 2006
 - Corridor 2 - by August 31, 2006
 - Corridor 3 - by July 31, 2006
 - Corridor 4 - by October 31, 2006
 - Corridor 5 - by April 30, 2007
 - Corridor 6 - by December 31, 2007
15. To develop and include with each Final Report a *Safety Action Plan* addressing the traffic safety issues specific to each corridor.
- Corridor 1 - by January 31, 2007
 - Corridor 2 - by June 30, 2007
 - Corridor 3 - by May 31, 2007
 - Corridor 4 - by August 31, 2007
 - Corridor 5 - by February 28, 2008
 - Corridor 6 - by November 30, 2008

NOTE: Nothing in this agreement shall be interpreted as a requirement, formal or informal, that an officer issue a specified or predetermined number of citations in pursuance of the obligations hereunder.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

A 48-month traffic safety project containing both educational and enforcement elements will be conducted. The project will be completed in four phases: Program Preparation, Implementation, Data Gathering and Analysis, and Final Report and Executive Summary.

⁶ Note: Some of the incentive and educational items could include key rings, bumper stickers, posters, badges, stickers, T-shirts, hats, poster and essay contests, wristbands, pledges, books, press kits, or pamphlets. The traffic safety message will be project-related. Planned venues for distribution include safety presentations, community events, CHP informational booths, etc.

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The following table may be used as a reference when considering how the project phases apply to each corridor:

| | Preparation | Implementation | Data Gathering and Analysis |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corridor 1 | 10-1-04 to 3-31-05 | 4-1-05 to 3-31-06 | 4-1-06 to 11-31-06 |
| Corridor 2 | 4-1-05 to 8-31-05 | 9-1-05 to 8-31-06 | 9-1-06 to 4-30-07 |
| Corridor 3 | 5-1-05 to 7-31-05 | 8-1-05 to 7-31-06 | 8-1-06 to 3-31-07 |
| Corridor 4 | 8-1-05 to 10-31-05 | 11-1-05 to 10-31-06 | 11-1-06 to 6-30-07 |
| Corridor 5 | 12-1-05 to 4-30-06 | 5-1-06 to 4-30-07 | 5-1-07 to 12-31-07 |
| Corridor 6 | 8-1-06 to 12-31-06 | 1-1-07 to 12-31-07 | 1-1-08 to 9-30-08 |

Phase 1 – Program Preparation (October 1, 2004, through December 31, 2006)

All necessary preparatory actions will be accomplished to effect a prompt and smooth transition to the Implementation Phase. Preparatory actions include the following:

1. The operational plans will be developed and issued.
2. The project logo will be developed.
3. Project educational materials, and/or OTS-approved promotional items,⁷ will be selected and ordered.
4. The “kick-off” news release will be prepared⁸ and issued.
5. Requests for any necessary contractual documents will be submitted.
6. Draft contracts will be forwarded to OTS for approval, and copies of executed contracts will also be forwarded to OTS.

⁷ All promotional materials (incentive items given to the public) must be specifically approved by OTS before items are ordered.

⁸ CHP regulations also specify requirements for internal organizational approval of news releases prior to issuance.

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7. The OPI will accomplish any other preparations necessary for timely project implementation, e.g., planning community safety presentations, coordinating with allied/other agencies, completing the language survey, preparing purchase requisitions for submission after OTS' official funding authorization, etc.

Phase 2 – Implementation (April 1, 2005, through December 31, 2007)

Project-related activities will be completed. Participating commands and allied agencies will accomplish assigned enforcement tasks. The public awareness campaign will be conducted. Progress toward objective accomplishment and goal achievement will be reported. Activities include the following:

1. Uniformed personnel will be deployed on overtime in support of project goals/objectives.
2. Allied agencies will participate in overtime deployments.
3. Public affairs officers (PAOs) will conduct safety presentations at appropriate venues, and distribute project educational/promotional materials. Samples will be forwarded to OTS.
4. The OPI will report progress toward the project goals and objectives in quarterly reports through channels to OTS.⁹

Phase 3 – Data Gathering and Analysis (October 1, 2004, throughout September 30, 2008)

Statistical data relating to the project goals and objectives will be collected, analyzed, and incorporated in quarterly reports. Quarterly reports for the quarter ending September 30 will include year-to-date comparisons of goals and objectives.

These reports will compare actual project accomplishments with the planned accomplishments. They will include information concerning changes made by the Project Director in planning and guiding the project efforts.

Data will be gathered on all project activities and results in order to support quarterly and final reporting of progress toward accomplishment of project objectives and achievement of the project goals.¹⁰

⁹ SWITRS collision data is normally available approximately six to eight months after the end of each reporting period. Throughout the project, unofficial locally-tracked collision data may be reported during the interim until official SWITRS data becomes available. Quarterly reports will clearly indicate any changes to previously reported data.

¹⁰ Although not a project goal or objective, citations issued by officers on project-funded overtime will be coded with a "special project code" to track the number of citations issued and the types of violations. Also, in accordance with OTS' August 2003 instructions regarding those projects for which the Data Gathering Phase continues for six months or longer after the Implementation Phase ends, no quarterly report for the last calendar quarter (or portion thereof) of project activity prior to the project ending date will be submitted, since the Final Reports will suffice.

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Phase 4 – Final Report and Executive Summary (October 1, 2008, through November 30, 2008)

Begin the Final Report and Executive Summary in accordance with OTS requirements specified in the Grant Program Manual, Chapter 7. Both will be submitted to OTS within 60 days after the grant ends. For multiple-corridor projects, separate reports and executive summaries will be prepared for each corridor upon termination of that corridor. The separate reports will then be assembled for simultaneous submission to OTS by the due date as the overall project Final Report.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Using the data compiled, the project manager will evaluate: (1) how well the stated project goals and objectives were accomplished, (2) whether all the activities outlined in the Method of Procedure were performed in accordance with the grant agreement, and (3) the project's cost effectiveness.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is the intent of the CHP to continue to identify specific traffic safety issues and to focus both enforcement and education resources to resolve or mitigate the influence of those issues on California's mileage death rate. The level of effort applied to address specific traffic safety issues will depend on competing priorities and available resources. CHP intends to devote available resources to reduce collisions statewide.

SCHEDULE A-1

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STATEMENT- Explain what type of priority this project has in your jurisdiction

This project is considered by the Department to be of high priority and has the full support of management.

AGENCY CONTRIBUTION- Explain what services or funds are being contributed by your agency in support of this project

The Department will provide all services necessary for coordination, administration, and evaluation of this project. The contribution will include, but is not limited to, the items listed below. Figures provided are based on estimated expenditures shown in Schedule B. As the project progresses, agency contribution will vary based upon actual expenditures, routine changes in billing/benefit rates, etc.

CONTRIBUTED ITEM

| | % | FY-1 | FY-2 | FY-3 | FY-4 | TOTAL |
|--|------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Indirect costs (associated with grant-funded personnel costs) | 13.90% | \$75,076.90 | \$86,298.17 | \$66,554.82 | \$37,739.44 | \$265,669.33 |
| Division/Air Coordinators (2 sergeants): | | | | | | |
| Salary | 5% | \$26,604.00 | \$28,733.40 | \$31,032.00 | \$8,214.30 | \$94,583.70 |
| Benefits | 5% | \$18,724.16 | \$20,222.85 | \$21,840.63 | \$5,781.31 | \$66,568.95 |
| Indirect costs | 5% | \$6,300.61 | \$6,804.92 | \$7,349.30 | \$1,945.39 | \$22,400.22 |
| Area Coordinators (100 officers) | | | | | | |
| Salary | 2% | \$19,854.72 | \$28,404.00 | \$30,677.40 | \$8,120.52 | \$87,056.64 |
| Benefits | 2% | \$13,973.95 | \$19,991.02 | \$21,591.06 | \$5,715.30 | \$61,271.33 |
| Indirect costs | 2% | \$4,702.19 | \$6,726.91 | \$7,265.32 | \$1,923.18 | \$20,617.60 |
| Patrol vehicle mileage (at 100 miles/8-hour-shift and 0.59/mile) | 100% | \$41,108.25 | \$47,701.50 | \$27,612.00 | \$5,074.00 | \$121,495.75 |
| TOTAL AGENCY CONTRIBUTION | 33% | \$206,344.78 | \$244,882.77 | \$213,922.53 | \$74,513.44 | \$739,663.52 |

SCHEDULE B
PAGE 1
DETAILED BUDGET ESTIMATE
PROJECT NO. PT0507

| | FISCAL YEAR (FY) ESTIMATES | | | | TOTAL COST TO PROJECT |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | FY-1 10/1/04 to 9/30/05 Actual Costs | FY-2 10/1/05 to 9/30/06 Actual Costs | FY-3 10/1/06 to 9/30/07 | FY-4 10/1/07 to 9/30/08 | |
| A. PERSONNEL COSTS (Positions & Salaries) | | | | | |
| <u>Uniformed Overtime Hours</u> (Hours and rates are approximations only. See Schedule B-1 for details.) | | | | | |
| 1. Sergeant - 1,495 Hours 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 252 @ \$68.83 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 88 @ \$74.34 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 63 @ \$74.34 10/1/07 - 12/31/07 | \$7,598.58 | \$83,050.31 | \$17,345.16 6,541.92 | \$4,683.42 | \$7,598.58 83,050.31 17,345.16 6,541.92 4,683.42 |
| 2. Officer - (includes 150 Court Hours) - 14,979 Hours 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 2,525 @ \$56.70 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 879 @ \$61.23 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 625 @ \$61.23 10/1/07 - 12/31/07 | 69,417.12 | 652,549.66 | 143,167.50 53,821.17 | 38,268.75 | 69,417.12 652,549.66 143,167.50 53,821.17 38,268.75 |
| 3. Officer (Pilot & Observer Flight Crews) - 389 Hours 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 80 @ \$125.32 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 30 @ \$135.35 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 15 @ \$135.35 10/1/07 - 12/31/07 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10,025.60 4,060.50 | 2,030.25 | 0.00 0.00 10,025.60 4,060.50 2,030.25 |
| 4. Uniformed Overtime Benefits @ 11.721% @ 9.493% @ 9.374% | 7,830.07 | 69,365.05 | 22,025.32 | 4,216.65 | 7,830.07 69,365.05 26,241.97 |
| <u>Nonuniformed Overtime Hours</u> | | | | | |
| 5. Public Safety Dispatchers - 366 Hours 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 63 @ \$37.02 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 21 @ \$38.87 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 19 @ \$38.87 10/1/07 - 12/31/07 | 1,410.92 | 4,617.75 | 2,332.26 816.27 | 738.53 | 1,410.92 4,617.75 2,332.26 816.27 738.53 |

SCHEDULE B
PAGE 2
DETAILED BUDGET ESTIMATE
PROJECT NO. PT0507

| | FISCAL YEAR (FY) ESTIMATES | | | | TOTAL COST TO PROJECT |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | FY-1 10/1/04 to 9/30/05 Actual Costs | FY-2 10/1/05 to 9/30/06 Actual Costs | FY-3 10/1/06 to 9/30/07 | FY-4 10/1/07 to 9/30/08 | |
| A. PERSONNEL COSTS (Positions & Salaries) - continued | | | | | |
| <u>Nonuniformed Overtime Hours (continued)</u> | | | | | |
| 6. Clerical Support - | | | | | |
| 367 Hours | | | | | |
| 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 | 976.54 | | | | 976.54 |
| 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 | | 6,482.10 | | | 6,482.10 |
| 63 @ \$28.61 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 | | | 1,802.43 | | 1,802.43 |
| 21 @ \$30.04 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 | | | 630.84 | | 630.84 |
| 19 @ \$30.04 10/1/07 - 12/31/07 | | | | 570.76 | 570.76 |
| 7. Graphic Designer III - | | | | | |
| 25 Hours | | | | | |
| 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 | 0.00 | | | | 0.00 |
| 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 | | 0.00 | | | 0.00 |
| 8. TV Specialist - | | | | | |
| 44 Hours | | | | | |
| 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 | 0.00 | | | | 0.00 |
| 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 | | 0.00 | | | 0.00 |
| 12 @ \$43.24 10/1/06 - 9/30/07 | | | 518.88 | | 518.88 |
| 9. Nonuniformed Overtime Benefits | | | | | |
| @ 15.504% | 351.35 | | | | 351.35 |
| @ 14.680% | | 1,637.81 | | | 1,637.81 |
| @ 15.011% | | | 915.77 | 196.54 | 1,112.31 |
| <u>Non-Uniformed Regular-Time Salary</u> | | | | | |
| (100% unless otherwise indicated) | | | | | |
| 10. AGPA (Project Management) - 2 | | | | | |
| 45 Months | | | | | |
| 10/1/04 - 9/30/05 | 119,946.48 | | | | 119,946.48 |
| 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 | | 125,267.33 | | | 125,267.33 |
| 9 @ \$5,509.00 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 | | | 99,162.00 | | 99,162.00 |
| 3 @ \$5,785.00 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 | | | 34,710.00 | | 34,710.00 |
| 9 @ \$5,785.00 10/1/07 - 6/30/08 | | | | \$104,130.00 | 104,130.00 |
| 3 @ \$6,074.00 7/1/08 - 9/30/08 | | | | \$36,444.00 | 36,444.00 |

SCHEDULE B
PAGE 3
DETAILED BUDGET ESTIMATE
PROJECT NO. PT0507

| | FISCAL YEAR (FY) ESTIMATES | | | | TOTAL COST TO PROJECT |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | FY-1 10/1/04 to 9/30/05 Actual Costs | FY-2 10/1/05 to 9/30/06 Actual Costs | FY-3 10/1/06 to 9/30/07 | FY-4 10/1/07 to 9/30/08 | |
| A. PERSONNEL COSTS (Positions & Salaries) - continued | | | | | |
| Non-Uniformed Regular-Time Salary (continued) | | | | | |
| 11. Non-Uniformed Regular-Time Benefits @ 56.316% @ 44.144% @ 47.119% | 47,568.63 | 48,237.30 | 63,079.15 | 66,237.06 | 47,568.63 48,237.30 129,316.21 |
| Category Sub-Total | \$255,099.69 | \$991,207.31 | \$460,954.77 | \$257,515.96 | \$1,964,777.73 |
| B. TRAVEL EXPENSE | | | | | |
| 1. In-State | \$7,985.56 | \$9,740.61 | \$9,000.00 | \$2,000.00 | \$28,726.17 |
| 2. Out-of-State | 1,626.66 | 935.39 | 5,000.00 | 2,000.00 | 9,562.05 |
| Category Sub-Total | \$9,612.22 | \$10,676.00 | \$14,000.00 | \$4,000.00 | \$38,288.22 |
| C. CONTRACTUAL SERVICES | | | | | |
| 1. Allied Agencies | \$864.40 | \$27,153.09 | \$25,000.00 | \$4,500.00 | \$57,517.49 |
| 2. Paid Media | 0.00 | 2,985.00 | 106,123.71 | | 109,108.71 |
| Category Sub-Total | \$864.40 | \$30,138.09 | \$131,123.71 | \$4,500.00 | \$166,626.20 |
| D. EQUIPMENT | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Category Sub-Total | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| E. OTHER DIRECT COSTS | | | | | |
| Applicable taxes included. | | | | | |
| 1. Promotional Items | \$2,815.68 | \$8,512.26 | \$2,000.00 | | \$13,327.94 |
| 2. Educational Materials | 11,572.76 | 5,337.60 | 0.00 | | 16,910.36 |
| 3. Training | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| 4. Corridor Signs | 699.97 | 1,075.38 | 1,000.00 | | 2,775.35 |
| 5. Minor Equipment | | 3,909.14 | 8,200.00 | | 12,109.14 |

SCHEDULE B
PAGE 4
DETAILED BUDGET ESTIMATE
PROJECT NO. PT0507

| | FISCAL YEAR (FY) ESTIMATES | | | | TOTAL COST TO PROJECT |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | FY-1 10/1/04 to 9/30/05 Actual Costs | FY-2 10/1/05 to 9/30/06 Actual Costs | FY-3 10/1/06 to 9/30/07 | FY-4 10/1/07 to 9/30/08 | |
| E. OTHER DIRECT COSTS (continued) | | | | | |
| 6. LIDAR (Radar Units) | | 0.00 | | | 0.00 |
| 7. Services (Task Force) | | | | | |
| a. Facility Fees | | | 6,000.00 | | 6,000.00 |
| b. Meeting Facility Fees | 384.00 | 5,369.00 | 2,305.00 | 600.00 | 8,658.00 |
| c. Transportation Fees | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| d. Display Booth Fees | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| e. Venue Fees | | | 2,500.00 | | 2,500.00 |
| 8. Fixed-Wing Aircraft Direct Operating Costs 389 Hours | | | | | |
| 1/1/05 - 9/30/05 | 2,909.26 | | | | 2,909.26 |
| 10/1/05 - 9/30/06 | | 3,251.26 | | | 3,251.26 |
| 50 @ \$75.00 10/1/06 - 6/30/07 | | | 3,750.00 | | 3,750.00 |
| 20 @ \$75.00 7/1/07 - 9/30/07 | | | 1,500.00 | | 1,500.00 |
| 15 @ \$75.00 10/1/07 - 6/30/08 | | | | 1,125.00 | 1,125.00 |
| 9. Graphic Services Support | 2,579.54 | 2,236.00 | 2,000.00 | | 6,815.54 |
| Category Sub-Total | \$20,961.21 | \$29,690.64 | \$29,255.00 | \$1,725.00 | \$81,631.85 |
| F. INDIRECT COSTS | | | | | |
| Category Sub-Total | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| PROJECT TOTAL | \$286,537.52 | \$1,061,712.04 | \$635,333.48 | \$267,740.96 | \$2,251,324.00 |

SCHEDULE B-1

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Page 1

A. PERSONNEL COSTS

Overtime:

- **Sergeant.** Overtime is provided for required supervision of activities.
- **Officer.** Overtime is provided for enforcement,¹ court appearances, public awareness safety presentations, and fixed-wing flight crews.
- **Public Safety Dispatcher (PSD) Support.** Overtime is provided for required dispatch support.
- **Clerical Support.** Overtime is provided for clerical staff to process the additional documents generated by the enhanced enforcement efforts.
- **Graphic/Photographer Support.** Overtime is provided for staff at the CHP Academy's Graphic Services Unit to develop and produce a project logo and/or other project materials. Overtime is also provided for a Photographer to produce pictorial products for use in reporting requirements and public awareness materials for the project.

Non-Uniformed Regular-Time Salary:

- **Associate Transportation Planner (ATP)/Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA).**
Two (2) full-time ATP/AGPA salaries are provided for the required project management.

Notes:

Overtime hours will be appropriately distributed among participating commands. Unused non-uniformed hours (either overtime or regular) may revert to enforcement. In addition, unused clerical support hours may also revert to PSD, and graphic/photographer support overtime in lieu of enforcement. Overtime is budgeted for specific positions. However, whenever a person within the specific position classification is not available, a supervisor may fill in. For example, a sergeant may work in place of an officer; a PSD Supervisor may work in place of a PSD; an Office Services Supervisor may work in place of an Office Assistant or Word Processing Technician.

¹ Enforcement may also include motorcycle officers and/or aircraft flight crews with the number of hours adjusted proportionately for differences in pay rates.

SCHEDULE B-1

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Page 2

Estimated personnel costs were based on current pay rates with projected annual increases each July. If multiple positions are specified, estimates were based on the most costly position. Hours, rates, and salaries indicated in Schedule B are approximations only, and may change during the project period. The intent is to use all available funding for the positions and functions described. Employee benefit rates indicated in the table below (as applicable) were also used in calculating estimated costs.

BENEFIT RATES²

| DESCRIPTION | OVERTIME | | REGULAR SALARY |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Uniformed | Nonuniformed | Nonuniformed |
| OASDI | N/A | 6.200% | 6.200% |
| Medicare | 1.450% | 1.450% | 1.450% |
| State Compensation | 7.924% | 7.361% | 7.361% |
| Health, Dental, & Vision | | | 15.111% |
| Retirement | | | 16.997% |
| Total | 9.374% | 15.011% | 47.119% |

B. TRAVEL EXPENSE

- **In-state.** Such travel includes necessary travel by SPS and task force/coalition personnel to corridor sites/meeting locations. Due to task force scheduling considerations, meetings and travel may occur after the end of the Implementation Phase. Funding will also permit travel by the grant program coordinator and GMS personnel to OTS conferences and seminars as determined by CHP Executive Management. Attendance at these events provides the program coordinator and GMS staff an opportunity to exchange pertinent information with other grant personnel concerning the grant process.
- **Out-of-state.** Funding provides for attendance by appropriate CHP personnel at various conferences and meetings of national traffic safety organizations such as the Transportation Research Board, International Association of Chiefs of Police, American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, Combined Accident Reduction Effort, and the annual Lifesavers Conference. Additionally, project out-of-state travel funds would provide for attendance at conferences and meetings where the corridor concept or other traffic-safety-related issues are discussed or presented, including Congressional training courses. These meetings and conferences will provide an excellent forum for discussion of California's corridor safety projects, as well as other traffic safety initiatives/programs, and sharing of information with other states conducting similar projects. All out-of-state travel is to receive prior approval from the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS).

² Rates shown were provided by CHP Accounting Section and were current as of the date of drafting of this document. However, rates may subsequently change, if appropriate, based upon standard departmental procedures for updating such rates.

SCHEDULE B-1

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Page 3

Note: Travel expenses include conference/seminar registration fees as well as hotel, transportation, and per diem costs.

C. CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

- Funding for allied agency participation is provided. For corridor projects, allied agencies most commonly include Caltrans, and occasionally local law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over selected corridor sites. Caltrans personnel participate in corridor task forces and/or provide expertise in development/review/implementation of safety action plans. If local law enforcement agencies agree to participate in the project, funding is provided to reimburse such agencies for personnel overtime costs. Personnel overtime will be used for activities specifically related to, and in direct support of, the project (e.g., additional enforcement, seatbelt checkups, child passenger restraint checkups, sobriety checkpoints, etc., as applicable based upon the focus of the corridor).
- Paid Media. Funding is provided for the production and airing of public service announcements to promote the goals and objectives of the project.

D. EQUIPMENT

No funding is provided for major equipment.

E. OTHER DIRECT COSTS

Corridor projects are unique in that site selection occurs after project commencement. After site selection, and based upon local conditions specific to each corridor, the associated task force determines necessary support items appropriate to its respective corridor. Therefore, expected needs in this category have not yet been identified, and flexibility in selection of such items is essential.

To accommodate this needed flexibility while fulfilling OTS requirements for specificity, each line item indicated in the Schedule B for this project is described below by a list of items commonly purchased by task forces during earlier corridor projects. The task force/coalition for each corridor in this project will choose the most appropriate items from those listed below based upon local conditions and allocated funding. The OPI will ensure that each task force exercises prudent judgment in determining which items to purchase, and the quantity of each. Quantities for strictly price-dependent items (e.g., bike helmets, child passenger restraints, radar units, etc.) are approximations only and may vary based on final unit cost.

SCHEDULE B-1

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Page 4

Upon task force/coalition selection of requested items, the list will be promptly forwarded via e-mail/fax through GMS to OTS for information. If OTS objects to any intended purchase, the Regional Coordinator may notify GMS, which will then terminate the acquisition if possible. If special circumstances warrant purchase of an appropriate and essential item not listed below, GMS will forward a fax/e-mail request to OTS for pre-purchase approval.

Corridor project budgets commonly include promotional items, educational materials, minor equipment, supplies, and services as line items. The following descriptions clarify each of these budget line items, and also list the most commonly purchased goods or services associated with that budget line item.

- **Promotional Items.** Promotional items are generally incentive handouts distributed at appropriate venues to encourage project support by the public. Such items include those listed in Schedule A, and/or other similar items of nominal value approved by OTS. In addition, certain corridor projects may focus on specific groups (e.g., children, commercial truck drivers, etc.). In those corridor projects, promotional items may also include handouts specifically tailored to the targeted group (e.g., child safety seats and bike helmets for children, or truck-related items such as log books, flashlights, compact disk wallets, tire tread depth gauges, tire pressure gauges, etc. for truck drivers). Also, community leaders who voluntarily participate as task force/coalition members are normally recognized for their service to local traffic safety through token awards, typically including such items as plaques, glass awards, coasters, and desk accessories (e.g., paperweights, quality writing sets, etc.), or other similar items of nominal value. All promotional items purchased under this grant will contain a project-related traffic safety message, and display appropriate logos (as space and cost reasonably permit) in the following order of precedence: project (if applicable), CHP, OTS, and BT&H.
- **Educational Materials.** Essential elements of any public awareness campaign, such items typically include production/printing/duplication of rack cards, flyers, brochures, signs, banners, posters, and/or other project-related printed materials. Displays (tabletop or free standing) for project-related printed materials may also be purchased. (Due to cost considerations, displays will be limited to a maximum of one per participating Area.) The production of decals identifying each safety corridor as such (for placement on permanent corridor signs as subsequently described) is also included. Under special circumstances, educational materials could also include production of audio-visual materials. All educational materials purchased under this grant will contain a project-related traffic safety message, and display appropriate logos (as space and cost reasonably) in the following order of precedence: project (if applicable), CHP, OTS, and BT&H.
- **Training.** Funding is provided for transportation planning courses to support the transportation elements of the "corridor" approach.

SCHEDULE B-1

PROJECT NO.: PT0507

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Page 5

- **Corridor Signs.** Along and within corridor rights-of-way, Caltrans may also produce and install permanent blank metal signs (to which safety corridor identification decals referenced earlier are then affixed). Outside corridor rights-of-way, permanent signs may be produced and installed on private property as appropriately negotiated. Installation costs of any such permanent signs are considered non-reimbursable and are not included. The number of signs per corridor will vary depending upon corridor length, available resources, and other factors. Cost estimates for the signs are based on an average Caltrans production cost of \$300 per sign.
- **Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR).** LIDAR is used to measure distance, speed, rotation, and chemical composition and concentration of a remote target where the target can be a clearly defined object, such as a vehicle, or a diffuse object such as a smoke plume or clouds. The Department will use LIDAR, which far surpasses radar, in measuring and supporting speed violations.
- **Minor Equipment.** This line item provides necessary support equipment for use by the Contra Costa substation, task forces, Academy graphic/photographic support personnel, and other assigned CHP Headquarters project coordinators to meet project objectives. Typically, this could include: office machines (faxing, laminating, binding, or multi-function machines), laptop computers, personal computers, printers, scanners, portable external hard drives, compact disk read-write (CD RW) drives, associated software, liquid crystal display (LCD) projectors and peripherals (screens, audio equipment, etc.), cameras (still or video), television/video camera recorder/digital video disk (TV/VCR/DVD) combinations, and hand-held radar units. Due to cost considerations, all items are normally limited to a maximum of one per participating CHP Area. Accessories, upgrades, and extended warranties may be included for any minor equipment items as appropriate.

Funding is also included for supplies which generally include those needed for operation of support equipment described earlier (memory cards for digital cameras, computer floppy or compact disks, printer cartridges, laminating and binding materials, paper, etc.).

- **Services.**
 - a. **Facility Fees.** Funding provides facility fees for a CHP substation from the Brentwood Police Department during Corridor 2's Implementation Phase. The substation will be located directly on Vasco Road, and will facilitate Contra Costa's response to collisions in the eastern portion (Vasco Road) of its jurisdiction. The substation would also allow officers to complete reports in Brentwood rather than traveling 45 to 60 minutes to their Martinez office.
 - b. **Meeting Facility Fees.** Funding provides required support for task force/coalition meetings and site surveys (i.e., meeting facility fees, and costs of transporting the task force to the site).
 - c. **Transportation Fees.** Transportation costs could include rental of appropriate conveyance (i.e., buses, vans, etc.).

SCHEDULE B-1

PROJECT No.: PT0507

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Page 6

d. Display Booth Fees. Fees associated with establishment of informational booths at appropriate venues are also included.

e. Venue Fees. Funding is provided for venue fees to set up booths to distribute promotional and educational items, and to utilize the public address system to announce the traffic safety message at corridor-specific sports venues. The sports venues provide an excellent community outreach effort in support of the project.

Sales tax, based upon the applicable rate(s) for the point(s) of delivery, has been included in the estimated cost of each item described.

- **Fixed-Wing Aircraft Direct Operating Costs (Flight Hours).** Funding in the Other Direct Costs category also provides for reimbursement of direct operating costs associated with aircraft flight hours to support the enhanced ground enforcement efforts. Aerial support may be used to detect and track violators, and to assist ground personnel in alleviating traffic safety hazards associated with collisions. Direct operating costs include fuel, oil, and maintenance costs, but do not include expenditures for flight crews. Although the budget estimates are based upon average fleet-wide operating costs for fixed-wing aircraft, rotary-wing aircraft may be substituted for fixed-wing flight hours on a cost-proportional basis (i.e., one rotary-wing flight hour may be substituted for four fixed-wing flight hours).

F. INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are included as an agency contribution in Schedule A-1.

G. PROGRAM INCOME

There will be no income generated as a result of this project.

Annex B

Project Operational Plan



**VASCO ROAD SAFETY CORRIDOR
PT0507, Corridor 2 Safety Corridor**

September 1, 2005, to August 31, 2006

OPERATIONAL PLAN

Please enter Special Project Code **543** on CHP 415s and enforcement documents (citations).

Please record the use of nonuniformed personnel overtime on the CHP 71s by entering the OTS project number (PT0507) in the "remarks" column adjacent to the date the overtime is worked. By the tenth day of the month following the pay period in which the overtime was worked, forward a copy to the CHP 71 to Accounting Section, Fund Accounting Unit.

NOTE: Before personnel at the Office Services Supervisor I or Communications Supervisor I level are authorized to work project reimbursed overtime, all rank and file office or dispatch staff must have been offered and declined the opportunity to work the overtime.

IMPORTANT: Please ensure that all original CHP 415s and copies of CHP 71s and travel expense claims are saved for four years after the project has ended, because these documents are subject to audit.

PROJECT GOAL

To reduce fatal and injury **victims** on Vasco Road as established by the Vasco Road Safety Corridor Task Force. The reduction will be measured during the Implementation Phase of the project, which is **September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006.**

Exact goals for Vasco Road will be established by September 30, 2005.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the corridor. Task force members will be identified and the initial meeting for the corridor will be scheduled by **December 31, 2004. Completed.**
2. To provide OTS with the required documentation of local support by **August 31, 2005. SPS Completed**
3. To issue an operational plan by **June 30, 2005**, establishing the method of operation and the policies applicable to carry out the grant program. **SPS Completed**
4. To conduct a language assessment of the project's service area to determine needs for materials in languages other than English for each corridor upon site selection by **August 31, 2005. Completed.**
5. To identify task force members and schedule the initial task force meeting by **June 30, 2005. Completed.**

6. To conduct a minimum of **four** task force/coalition meetings during project's Implementation Phase (September 1, 2005, to August 31, 2006).
6. To identify, through each task force/coalition, at least four factors, including conditions and behaviors, negatively impacting traffic safety on the corridor, and to identify potential short- and/or long-term solutions to the problems by **February 28, 2006**.
7. To implement at least two potential solutions per corridor within 12 months after each initial task force convenes by **August 31, 2006**.
8. To deploy officers on project-funded overtime along appropriate routes to enforce traffic violations consistent with the identified "top five" reportable collision primary collision factors during the project Implementation Phase (September 1, 2005, to August 31, 2006).
9. To conduct a public awareness campaign to include the issuance of a news release announcing the kick-off of the Vasco Road Safety Corridor Project by **August 31, 2005**.
10. To develop a project logo by **August 31, 2005**. Completed.
11. To conduct at least one public affairs officer (PAO) presentation per month during the period of **September 1, 2005, to August 31, 2006**.

PAO PRESENTATIONS
Highway 395

| Month | Location | # of Attendees |
|----------------|----------|----------------|
| September 2005 | | |
| October | | |
| November | | |
| December | | |
| January 2006 | | |
| February | | |
| March | | |
| April | | |
| May | | |
| June | | |
| July | | |
| August | | |

12. To develop localized educational materials and promotional items encouraging participation in project goals and objectives, educational presentations, etc. Items must include a traffic safety message, and if space is available, the OTS and BT&H logos. Materials are to be distributed at appropriate venues by **August 31, 2006**.
13. To use the following standard language in all press and media materials: **"Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California of Traffic Safety."**
14. To develop and include with the Final Report a *Safety Action Plan* addressing the traffic safety issues specific to Highway 395 by **June 30, 2007**. SPS

Method of Procedure

Phase I– Program Preparation (April 1, 2005, through August 31, 2005)

1. For each corridor:
 - a. Select the corridor.
 - b. Identify prospective task force members.
 - c. Request a letter of support from city(ies)/counties that may be involved in the grant.
 - d. Locate a convenient meeting place.
 - e. Prepare an initial agenda that includes project goals and objectives and overview of grant funding resources and guidelines.
 - f. Collect and format three years of corridor collision data for analysis by the task force and Grants Management Section. Data will include, at a minimum, the location, primary collision factor, time of day, day of week, and month of year for all fatal and injury collisions.
Completed.
 - g. Develop a deployment strategy using project-funded enforcement overtime.
 - hi. Conduct an initial task force meeting. **Completed**
2. The operational plan will be developed, published, and issued.
3. The project logo will be developed. **Completed**
4. The OPI will:
 - a. Prepare and secure required OTS approvals (all news releases must be approved by CHP Grants Management Section via e-mail for fax) and issue the pre-project news release.
SPS/CHP Area
 - b. Be responsible for writing minutes for all task force meetings. **SPS**
 - c. Prepare and complete all grant quarterly reports to be submitted to OTS. **SPS**
 - d. Submit requests for any necessary contractual documents, ensures that OTS receives copies of such requests, and provide copies of all executed contracts to OTS. **SPS**

Phase II – Implementation (September 1, 2005, to August 31, 2006)

Project-related activities will be completed. Participating commands and allied agencies will accomplish assigned enforcement tasks. The public awareness campaign will be conducted. Progress toward objective accomplishment and goal achievement will be reported. Activities should include:

1. Uniformed personnel will deployed on overtime in support of project goals/objectives.
2. Allied agencies will participate, if applicable.
3. For the Vasco Road Safety Corridor:

- a. The task force will meet quarterly, but may meet more often as necessary.
 - b.. The task force will decide the most effective use of resources provided by the grant to meet the project goal of reducing reportable traffic collisions.
 - c. The task force will identify at least four factors, including conditions and behaviors that can be changed to improve the roadway environment and the safety of the corridor. The task force will develop a *Safety Action Plan*, the final version of which will be published with the Final Report. At a minimum, the *Safety Action Plan* will include the following elements:
 - ☞ Safety issues (concerns, problems, etc.).
 - ☞ Safety solutions (short- and long-term).
 - ☞ Assignment of responsibilities.
 - ☞ Identification of funding sources.
 - ☞ Implementation schedule.
 - d. Following identification of conditions and behaviors affecting traffic safety on the corridor, the task force will develop and conduct a public information and education campaign.
 - e. During the Implementation Phase, the task force will implement at least two solutions identified in its plan.
4. The OPI will report progress toward the project goal(s) and objectives in quarterly reports through channels to OTS.

Phase III – Data Gathering and Analysis (September 1, 2006 to April 30, 2007) SPS

With the assistance of the Contra Costa and Dublin CHP Areas, the Special Projects Section Corridor Safety Unit will gather information on task force activities. Collision data will be collected by the involved Areas to support goal progress reporting. Although not a project goal or objective, citations issued by officers on project-funded overtime will be coded with a special project code to track the number of citations written, type of vehicle cited, and the violation. Data related to achievement of the project goal/objectives will be compiled and analyzed for inclusion in the final report.

Phase IV – Final Report and Executive Summary (October 1, 2008, through November 30, 2008) SPS

A Final Report and Executive Summary will be prepared specific to each corridor by the SPS project coordinator. The Final Report will include a Safety Action Plan.

BUDGET SUMMARY:

This Traffic Safety Corridor Project is funded through Office of Traffic Safety grant #PT0507. The grant provides funds the following funds for the Vasco Road Safety Corridor project:

Enhanced Enforcement Overtime (Hours split 70/30 between Contra Costa and Dublin)

| | | |
|--|--|---------------|
| CHP Officer overtime | 2,465 hours | \$131,134.50* |
| Contra Costa = | 1725 hrs (use 145 Hrs in 9/05; 1,580 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06) | |
| Dublin = | 740 hrs (use 60 Hrs in 9/05; 680 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06) | |
| CHP Pilot and Observer Flight Crews | 93 hours | \$10,911.56* |
| Golden Gate Division | (use 10 Hrs in 9/05; 83 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06) | |
| CHP Sergeant overtime | 245 hours | \$15,817.85* |
| Contra Costa = | 170 hrs (use 20 Hrs 9/05; 150 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06) | |
| Dublin = | 75 hrs (use 10 Hrs 9/05; 65 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06) | |
| Public Safety Dispatcher overtime | 61 hours | \$2,168.46* |
| | Use 5 Hrs in 9/05; 56 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06 | |
| Clerical Support overtime | 60 hours | \$1,648.60* |
| | Use 5 Hrs, in 9/05; 55 Hrs 10/1/05 to 8/31/06 | |

*Does not include benefits.

Contractual Services

Allied Agency \$20,000.00

Other Direct Costs

Promotional Items \$1,500.00

Pens & Pencils \$1,203.20 Spent

Educational Materials \$5,300.00

Rack Cards \$1,487.38 Spent

Notepad 3,282.50

Banners 484.88

\$5254.76

Fixed-Wing Operating Costs (93 hours) \$6,975.00

Corridor Signs \$825.00

Bus Rental (for field review) \$950.00

Meeting room rental \$1,200.00

Display booth fees \$350.00

Support equipment NONE

TOTAL \$198,780.97

Annex C

Safety Action Plan



VASCO ROAD SAFETY CORRIDOR SAFETY ACTION PLAN

ELEMENTS: This Safety Action Plan (SAP) lists identified problems on the corridor, descriptive details, and potential corrective actions being considered for implementation by the responsible agency, as conditions and resources permit. This SAP is comprised of the following elements: Enforcement, Public Information/Education, and Signing/Striping/Engineering. Although exceptions are common, CHP generally has responsibility for items within the Enforcement and Public Information/Education elements. Caltrans generally has responsibility for items within the Signing/Striping/Engineering element. CHP has overall responsibility for this SAP.

FUNDING: PT0507 funded enhanced enforcement and public education efforts along the corridor from September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2006. Because Vasco Road is a county roadway, improvements are funded through Contra Costa County.

ABBREVIATIONS:

Caltrans = California Department of Transportation
 CBS = County Board of Supervisors
 CHP = California Highway Patrol
 CTA = California Trucking Association
 CVS = CHP Commercial Vehicle Section
 DMV = Department of Motor Vehicles
 EB = eastbound
 Fwy = freeway
 GSU = CHP Academy Graphic Services Unit
 HQ = Headquarters
 I = Interstate
 Int = intersection
 Intrchg = interchange
 IP = Implementation Phase

Jct = junction
 MPH = miles per hour
 MM = milepost marker
 NB = northbound
 OTS = Office of Traffic Safety
 PCF = primary collision factor
 PA&ED = Project Approval and Environmental Document
 PID = Project Initiation Document
 PSR = Project Study Report
 SAP = Safety Action Plan
 SB = southbound
 SR = State Route
 SSE = signing/striping/engineering
 TF = task force

TMC = Transportation Management Center
 WB = westbound



VASCO ROAD SAFETY CORRIDOR SAFETY ACTION PLAN

| SIGNING, STRIPING AND ENGINEERING | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| MM OR LOCATION DESCRIPTION | OBSERVATION/ PROBLEM | SUGGESTION OR ACTION | DESIRED RESULT | ACTION AGENCY/ FUNDING | STATUS |
| 1. Various locations on the corridor. | Passing in no passing areas. | Install median rumble strip detail. Install centerline delineators. | To prevent unsafe passing. | Alameda and Contra Costa counties | Accomplished. |
| 2. Entire corridor. | Speeding drivers and illegal passing. | Implement a safety enhanced double fine zone (SEDFZ). | To improve traffic safety. | State Legislature | Accomplished. SEDFZ to be in effect 1/1/07 to 12/31/10. SEDFZ signs were installed by Alameda and Contra Costa counties. |
| 3. Various locations on the corridor. | Drivers using the shoulder to pass slower moving vehicles. | Install shoulder rumble strip detail. | To prevent drivers from using the shoulder to pass slower moving traffic. | Alameda and Contra Costa counties | Accomplished. |
| 4. Entire corridor. | Passing in no passing areas. | Install a center median. | To prevent unsafe passing. | Alameda and Contra Costa counties | Pending. |
| 5. Entire corridor. | Increased traffic volumes, especially during peak commute periods, have caused congestion. | Widen to four lanes (two lanes in each direction). | To increase road capacity and decrease congestion. | Any available funding. Alameda and Contra Costa counties | Pending. |
| 6. NB and SB intersection with Camino Diablo Road. | Long traffic queue during commute hours resulting in a high incidence of rear-end collisions. | Lengthen the additional NB and SB lanes recently added at Camino Diablo intersection to provide NB and SB passing zones and provide exclusive right-turn lanes on Vasco at the intersection. | To prevent rear-end collisions and to move traffic more efficiently through the intersection. | Contra Costa County | The additional lanes were installed as through lanes rather than exclusive right-turn lanes. |
| 7. Various locations on the corridor. | Former passing areas were made no passing zones. | Install "Do Not Pass" signs. | To prevent unsafe passing. | Contra Costa County | Accomplished. |



VASCO ROAD SAFETY CORRIDOR SAFETY ACTION PLAN

| PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| ACTION | MECHANISM | DESIRED RESULT | AGENCY/FUNDING | STATUS |
| 1. Develop a logo and slogan for the corridor. | Task force to develop/approve slogan and logo. | To provide a strong identifying factor for the task force and its activities. | CHP and Liberty High School | Accomplished by Liberty High School. |
| 2. Conduct a news conference to announce task force and enhanced enforcement efforts. | Conduct a news conference. | To announce task force activities, raise awareness of safe driving practices, and notify the public of enhanced enforcement on the corridor. | CHP | Not accomplished. |
| 3. Develop video public service announcements for airing on local television stations and in local movie theaters. | Produce public service announcements. | To promote the safety corridor to the community. | Education grant and donations from local businesses. | Accomplished by Liberty High School. |
| 4. Print rack cards and posters that emphasize safe driving practices. | Printed material to be distributed through agencies involved in the task force, local businesses, schools, clubs, and other public forums. | To remind/educate drivers of safe driving practices, and to reduce collisions on the corridor. | CHP/PT00507 | Accomplished. |
| 5. Develop public awareness of the safety corridor as vehicles enter the corridor. | Install safety corridor signs along the corridor. | To remind drivers that Vasco Road is a safety corridor and will have enhanced enforcement to encourage safe driving habits. | Contra Costa County | Accomplished. |
| 6. Order public information items imprinted with the task force logo and slogan to acquaint the public regarding the corridor project. | Use fairs and other public forums to distribute promotional items to the driving public who use the corridor. | To raise driver awareness that enhanced law enforcement efforts are being focused on the Vasco Road corridor. | PT0507 | Accomplished. |
| 7. Order two banners with project slogan and logo. | Use at public events and ask local businesses to display a banner. | To raise public awareness of the safety corridor project | PT0507 | Accomplished. |



VASCO ROAD SAFETY CORRIDOR SAFETY ACTION PLAN

ENFORCEMENT

PROBLEM DEFINITION: The majority of the collisions on the corridor are caused by speeding drivers, tailgating, and unsafe passing. The task force agreed that enhanced enforcement would assist in reducing *Vehicle Code* violations, and thereby reduce the number of collisions on the corridor.

ACTION: The CHP Contra Costa and Dublin Areas increased their presence on the corridor. Officers directed special attention to citing rules-of-the-road violations, especially unsafe speed. In addition, they were alert for people who were driving under the influence. Services and assistance provided by law enforcement to motorists on the corridor also increased.

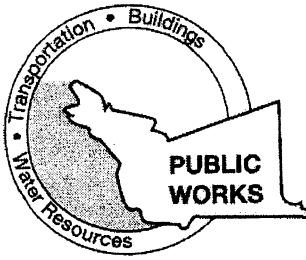
MECHANISM: Funding for overtime to enhance enforcement on the corridor was secured through a grant project agreement, PT0507, with OTS.

DESIRED RESULT: Increased law enforcement presence along with increased contact through enforcement and motoring services, to encourage drivers to comply with the *Vehicle Code* and thus reduce collisions.

FUNDING STATUS: Enhanced enforcement was funded through and OTS grant, Safe Highway Coalitions, PT0507.

Annex D

Press Releases



**COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY**

399 Elmhurst Street • Hayward, CA 94544-1395
(510) 670-5480

PRESS RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

Obaid Khan
Associate Engineer
(510) 670-5480

November 10, 2004

DRIVER FEEDBACK SIGNS INSTALLED AT VASCO ROAD

If you have recently driven on Vasco Road, you probably have noticed the new flashing Driver Feedback Signs installed to raise the awareness level of speeding motorists to posted speed limits. Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, District One, championed the installation of these signs, donated by the 3M Company, as a safety enhancement for Vasco Road, a heavily-traveled, commuter roadway. Vasco Road has a history of serious accidents resulting from excessive speeding. In the past, Driver Feedback Signs have proven to be highly effective in residential areas and on roadways surrounding schools.

Driver Feedback Signs, such as the signs installed at Vasco, have also been installed along this roadway in Contra Costa County. The signs are solar charged and are programmed to work during peak commute hours. In the next few months, the Alameda County Public Works Agency will conduct a traffic assessment study to evaluate the impact of the Driver Feedback Signs on motorists' speed along Vasco Road.

END

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2005

VISUAL DELINEATORS TO BE INSTALLED ALONG VASCO ROAD

BRENTWOOD—Supervisor Mary N. Piepho today announced that her office has undertaken a joint effort with the Contra Costa County Public Works Department and the Vasco Road Safety Task Force to install visual delineators along portions of Vasco Road to enhance safety along this stretch of dangerous roadway.

“I am extremely pleased with this great effort that Public Works has undertaken. We know that there is a history of fatalities along Vasco Road and we have to work tirelessly to keep improving the safety measures to ensure that we end the number of fatalities and cross over accidents that occur along this roadway,” said Supervisor Piepho.

The Vasco Road Safety Task Force has been working to identify and implement safety improvements for many years. The Task Force was influential in drawing much needed attention to California Senate Bill 802, authored by Senator Torlakson and Assemblyman Guy Houston, which designated Vasco Road as part of California Highway 84, permitting Vasco Road to become eligible for state highway improvement funds. The Task Force has also worked closely with government officials to get Vasco Road designated as a California Safety Corridor. The Task Force members include the California Highway Patrol, members of the Brentwood community and Jeff Altman, who lost his wife to a tragic accident on Vasco Road years ago.

There will be approximately 11.2 miles of visual barriers along the centerline of Vasco Road, beginning at the intersection of Camino Diablo extending south to the Alameda County line and into Alameda County for approximately 1.3 miles.

###

Annex E

News Articles



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Deadly Accidents on Vasco Road Worry Drivers

Hau Kuiang


Three people died in Monday's crash.

The California Highway Patrol is trying to ease public fears about a stretch of road in the East Bay after a series of deadly accidents.

Vasco Road is an 18-mile two-lane road, running south of Brentwood to Interstate 580 in Livermore. Over the past two weeks, six people have died in accidents there.

Authorities blame the crashes on aggressive drivers ignoring posted speed limits. However, statistics show the number of accidents have actually dropped. In the year 2000 there were 74 accidents. The number fell to 64 in 2001, and 54 in 2002. The CHP reports only 18 accidents so far this year.

» 06-06-2003

Previous Coverage:

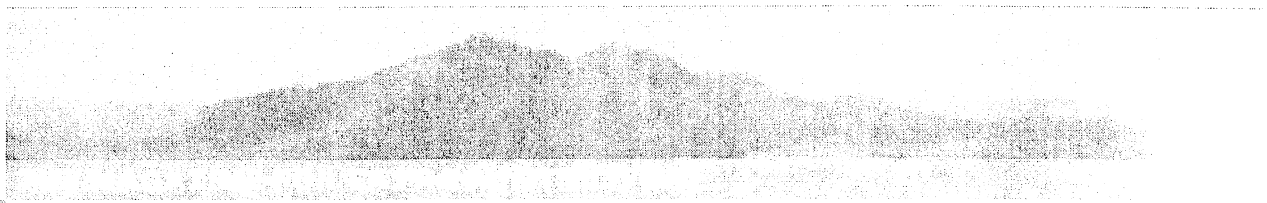
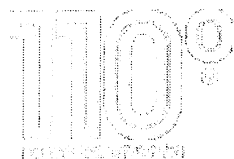
- Fiery Crash Closes East Bay Road
- Three Dead in Huge Chain Reaction Crash

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THE VASCO NIGHTMARE

We Crave Some Action

by Joanne Flynn
Photos by Brad Shifflett

My best friend, Patricia Altman, died three months ago on Vasco Road as the result of an incident that never would have escalated into an accident if it had occurred on a road incorporating the basic safety feature of mid-highway barriers. A trailer with a broken hitch crossed the centerline, crashed into the car she was driving, killing her instantly.



I remember that when I got the word about Patricia's death, I felt like someone had punched me in the stomach. I was physically ill, and when I learned the details of the absolutely senseless nature of her death, I felt almost overcome by despair and grief. Even now I continue to be shocked and heartbroken that she is gone. I still wake up some mornings and think, "Oh my God," as I realize that I have to live another day in Patricia's absence.

Now Where Did I Put that Club?

I guess a terrible emotional trauma such as that created by my friend's death stirs up flight-or-fight psychological responses in people's hearts. "Flight" in this case would involve retreating to some emotionally sheltered position marked by avoidance and suppression of my anger and grief. Possibly it would involve a lot of daytime TV and junk food.

But I realized that I could also fight in response to the tragic event. I could channel my anger and grief in combating the circumstances that led to Patricia's death. It didn't take me long to identify the specific adversary worthy of doing battle against. It took only a few days to realize that my friend's death was a direct outcome of apathy and ignorance on the part of both public officials and private citizens.

Fighting for Necessary Changes

"It's the squeaking wheel that gets the grease" is said more truly about governmental action than about anything else in society. Vasco Road highway improvement is a project that government agencies should have dealt with 25 deaths ago, but nobody squeaked with sufficient volume to pressure agencies and bureaucrats to make the required changes.

CURRENT ISSUE



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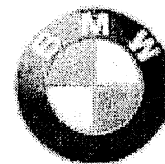
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But now my friend, Patricia, has died, as only one of the dozen people killed on that highway during the past few years. So Patricia's family and I are only a few of the hundreds and hundreds of people who have been physically and emotionally damaged by something that could have been prevented. So now her widowed husband, Jeff, and I, together with some of the people who loved her, and others who have themselves lost loved ones, are starting to squeak as hard as we can. We're doing our best to become such a thorn in the side of the people who hold the reins of power that we will goad them to action.



Jeff pointed out that everyone we talk to asks the same question, "When are they going to do something?" Well, we're coming up with the answer, "They're going to do something now." We're taking the fight against the inertia that has slowed improvement to its current glacial pace. We've made the conscious decision to fight against this apathy.



This is a matter of life and death. We want changes now. Jeff says that short term solutions to some legislators means 10 years. That's too long! That's too many fatalities! We want changes in six months! We're telling the elected officials to be creative and to think outside of the box as they look for solutions. We need to put safety priorities first and to concentrate on necessities not wishes.

There is still a lot to be done. California is in the worst financial crisis in the history of this State, and money is being poorly spent. When on a budget, you put necessities first, then wants. This is a necessity. We can't turn back the clock; however, we can fix what is broken.

When we began our quest, we discovered almost immediately that some of the people in power, like Senator Torlakson, have a genuine desire to respond effectively to the challenges and were glad to become allies with us.

Identifying Worthy Tasks and Goals

Jeff Altman and I have formed the CRAVE (Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences) committee to make things happen in order to make the road safer.

- We encouraged the progress of SB 802, authored by Senators Torlakson and Houston, which designates Vasco as part of Highway 84, permitting the road to become eligible for State Highway improvement funds.
- We are working with the State Highway Patrol to encourage their efforts in responding to the problem:

- Increase surveillance with extra patrols
- Increase the number of Highway Patrol Response Teams
- Deploy speed trailers and air patrols
- Add signage, such as "Turn On Headlights" signs.

- We are pushing for the "Vasco Safety Week Proclamation" to become official by both Brentwood and Discovery Bay.

- We supported the Vasco Road Safety Forum, October 16, 7:30, at the Liberty High School Performing Arts Center.

- We are sponsoring the <http://vascoroad.com> website.

- We are sponsoring petitions to encourage politicians and bureaucrats to get involved in Vasco Road improvement projects.

- We are creating a sub-committee for peaceful protests. We'll be prepared to start walking and knocking on people's doors if it ever becomes necessary to do so.

- We are supporting gathering and maintaining statistics to monitor and define the actual problem.
- We are trying to reach out to Pleasanton and Livermore, encouraging them to get involved and on-board with us.

Jeff makes the good point that the activities we are involved in aren't really about us. They are about our community; they are about changing the future. They are about doing things to make a difference so that no more Patricia's will be killed in the future. Patricia was only 36! She left five children behind!

We've made the conscious decision to create a grass-roots movement to stir up people and politicians alike to join a concerted effort to make changes that will ensure that the kind of senseless death Patricia died that day, on that sunny stretch of highway, will never happen again. Not there! Not like that! Not again!

You Can Help Patricia's Boys

A fund for the Altman's boys, aged 4 1/2 to 17, has been set up. You can donate to the Bank of America Patricia Altman Family Fund at P.O. Box 1418, Brentwood, CA 94513.

Check for updates about this on the <http://vascoroad.com> website.

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Posted on Fri, Jun. 06, 2003

Vasco Road gets a bad rap

CHP says impatient, aggressive drivers the problem

By Kristi Belcamino
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

BRENTWOOD - South of lush orchards where people can pick their own fruit, Vasco Road begins. The speed limit through the rolling, wheat-colored hills starts at 55 mph. The blacktop is smooth, wide and straight as it passes by occasional cows and ramshackle barns.

For 13 miles the road is wide and gently curving, with paved shoulders and intermittent passing lanes.

Then, just south of the Alameda County line, the road narrows dramatically to two lanes. With no shoulders, it hugs tight curves winding through the hills. The road is so sharply curved that drivers find it difficult to see more than a car length ahead.

Although the speed limit in this section drops to 30 mph, drivers zip along as if they are on a race course. Big rigs crowd the narrow road and cars travel in fast-moving caravans.

Six people have died in car crashes on both sections of Vasco Road over the past two weeks, raising questions about how safe the busy commuter route is.

The 18-mile rural portion of Vasco Road is a vital artery for East Contra Costa residents commuting to Tri-Valley jobs. Beginning just south of Brentwood, it links up with Interstate 580.

For some commuters, like Justine Sampson, 38, of Discovery Bay, driving to her job in San Jose every day can be a hair-raising experience.

"You feel like you have to be Mario Andretti," she said. "People come up so fast behind you, you can't even see the headlights on their car. It's just awful, especially in the Alameda County portion."

Other drivers pass when they aren't supposed to, or use turn lanes to pass.

"Something needs to be done," Sampson said. "I don't need to worry about my life driving to work and coming home every day."

California Highway Patrol statistics show accidents in general are decreasing on Vasco Road.

Most seem to stem from speeding, or from drivers crossing double yellow lines, passing unsafely or not yielding at right of ways such as intersections, said CHP Officer Cliff Kroeger.

People drive Vasco Road as if it's a freeway, he said.

Although passing lanes have been added and the speed limit raised to 55 mph in places, drivers are aggressive and impatient, he said.

"Even the people driving it realize that it's other people driving the road that are causing the accidents," Kroeger said. "If people drive it the way it's supposed to be driven, it's a nice, smooth, careful road."

Eric Jorgensen of Oakley, who has commuted to Palo Alto for 14 years, agrees.

"I think it's ridiculous to say it's a deadly road," he said. "People are saying Vasco Road is terrible. It's not at all. It's that people are in too much of a hurry. What it needs is more CHP patrol."

Drivers have passed him even on the tightly curved Alameda County portion of the road, he said. "I probably am one of the people sworn at all the time because I drive the speed limit."

The most recent fatal crash on Vasco occurred Tuesday on the newer portion. A minivan driver pulled out from the Walnut Boulevard intersection and was struck by a flatbed truck.

On May 26, three people were killed when a driver crossed the double yellow lines near Los Vaqueros Road in Alameda County and hit three other vehicles.

In response to those crashes, the CHP in both counties has increased patrols on Vasco Road.

"Even though the accident rates are down and traffic volumes up, we still have severe accidents," Kroeger said. "We want to see what we can do to resolve those issues."

The last study, in 1997, showed some 17,000 cars drive Vasco Road each day, said Steve Kowalewski, Contra Costa County assistant public works director. That number could be as high as 20,000 now, he said.

A 13-mile stretch of the road between Brentwood and the Alameda County line was vastly improved in 1996 when Los Vaqueros Reservoir was built. Because of the development, the Contra Costa Water District relocated the road.

Plans to improve a 1.2-mile portion of the road that runs from south of the Contra Costa County line into the outskirts of Livermore are at a standstill in part because of state budget woes.

Three years of construction had been slated to begin next year, but that plan is now up in the air. The cost, once estimated at \$13.5 million, has now reached as much as \$20 million.

The two counties have agreed to split the costs not covered by state funding.

The state Transportation Congestion Relief Program has allocated \$6.5 million to improve Vasco Road, but Gov. Gray Davis has proposed freezing that funding, said Robert Oakes, a spokesman for Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch.

The senator, who sponsored legislation allocating the funding, has contacted the governor's office and the California Transportation Commission urging them to keep it intact, Oakes said.

"Any fatalities are unacceptable," Oakes said. "The killing needs to stop out there. A lot of this seems to involve driver behavior. We are seeing people coming out of the winding portion and gunning it. The CHP will tell you, they are routinely tagging people at 80, 90 plus out there."

"Vasco Road is just killing people. It's got to stop."

ABOUT VASCO ROAD

It is a two-lane road that runs 18 miles from Walnut Boulevard south of Brentwood to Interstate 580 in Livermore. In some areas, it widens to three lanes to accommodate a passing lane.

The speed limit ranges from 30 mph to 55 mph.

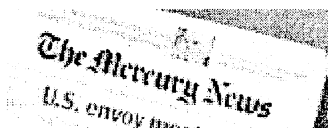
An estimated 17,000 to 20,000 cars a day drive it between Brentwood and the outskirts of Livermore.

Since 2000, the total number of accidents has dropped:

- In 2000, 74 accidents, one resulting in a fatality.
- In 2001, 64 accidents, one resulting in a fatality.
- In 2002, 54 accidents, two resulting in two fatalities.
- So far this year, 18 accidents, two resulting in six fatalities.

Kristi Belcamino covers police, crime and public safety. Reach her at 925-945-4782 or kbelcamino@cctimes.com.

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 Posted on Sat, Jun. 07,
2003

The Mercury News

CHP: Vasco Road doesn't cause crashes

AGGRESSIVE, IMPATIENT DRIVERS ARE THE REAL PROBLEM,

OFFICERS SAY

 By Kristi Belcamino
Contra Costa Times

BRENTWOOD - South of lush orchards where people can pick their own fruit, Vasco Road begins. The speed limit through the rolling, wheat-colored hills is 55 mph. The blacktop is smooth, wide and straight as it passes occasional cows and ramshackle barns.

For 13 miles the road is wide and gently curving, with paved shoulders and intermittent passing lanes until it narrows dramatically to two lanes just south of the Alameda County line.

With no shoulders, it hugs tight curves through the hills. The road is so sharply curved that drivers find it difficult to see more than a car length ahead. But drivers ignore the 30 mph speed limit in the curves and zip along as if on a race course. Big rigs crowd the narrow road and cars travel in rapid caravans.

Six people have died in crashes on both sections of the road in two weeks, raising questions about how safe the busy commuter route is.

The 18-mile rural portion of Vasco Road is a vital artery for eastern Contra Costa County residents commuting to jobs in the Tri-Valley and beyond. Just south of Brentwood, it links with Interstate 580.

For some commuters, like Justine Sampson, 38, of Discovery Bay, driving to her job in San Jose every day can be hair-raising.

"You feel like you have to be Mario Andretti," she said. "People come up so fast behind you, you can't even see the headlights on their car. It's just awful, especially in the Alameda County portion."

Other drivers pass when it is illegal or use turn lanes to do so.



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``Something needs to be done," Sampson said. ``I don't need to worry about my life driving to work and coming home every day."

California Highway Patrol statistics show accidents in general are decreasing on Vasco Road.

Most seem to stem from speeding, or from drivers crossing double yellow lines, passing riskily or not yielding at rights of way such as intersections, said CHP officer Cliff Kroeger.

People drive Vasco Road as if it is a freeway, Kroeger said.

Although passing lanes have been added and the speed limit raised to 55 mph in places, drivers are aggressive and impatient, he said.

``Even the people driving it realize that it's other people driving the road that are causing the accidents," Kroeger said. ``If people drive it the way it's supposed to be driven, it's a nice, smooth, careful road."

Eric Jorgensen of Oakley, who has commuted to Palo Alto every day for 14 years, agrees.

``I think it's ridiculous to say it's a deadly road," he said. ``People are saying Vasco Road is terrible. It's not at all. It's that people are in too much of a hurry. What it needs is more CHP patrol."

Drivers have passed him even on the tightly curved Alameda County portion of the road, he said.

``I probably am one of the people sworn at all the time because I drive the speed limit," he said.

The most recent fatal crash occurred Tuesday on the newer portion. A minivan driver pulled out from the Walnut Boulevard intersection and was struck by a flatbed truck.

On May 26, three people were killed when a driver crossed the double yellow lines near Los Vaqueros Road in Alameda County and hit three other vehicles.

In response to those crashes, the CHP in both counties has increased patrols.

``Even though the accident rates are down and traffic volumes up, we still have severe accidents," Kroeger said. ``We want to see what we can do to resolve those issues."

The last study, in 1997, showed that approximately 17,000 cars drive Vasco each day, said Steve Kowalewski, Contra Costa County assistant public works director. That number could be as high as 20,000 now, he said.

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NIGHTMARE – VASCO ROAD

by Don Huntington



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HOME

For the second time in a week, a car accident has killed three people on Vasco Road, police said. (San Jose Mercury News)

"We all went together to go picking fruit," said a 17-year-old survivor of the fiery crash.

We can travel between Livermore and Brentwood enough times to become inured to the majesty and beauty of the scenery along Vasco Road. However, the deaths, dismemberments, and injuries on that road can never come so often that they no longer shake our emotions and imaginations. Even when it doesn't kill somebody, Vasco Road serves up an accident every week or so. These stop traffic dead, usually right in the middle of commute traffic that is so congested on most days even without any accident as to be nearly unendurable. Recent statistics show that the number of accidents has been declining while the number of deaths has been increasing.

Over the past five years, Alameda County reports a 300 percent increase in traffic on many of its rural roads. It is estimated that Vasco Road gets between 19,000 and 24,000 vehicles a day, with a peak volume of about 1,900 an hour. The people at risk every day on Vasco Road include an amazing number of teamsters — those "kings of the highway" sitting high in the cabs of their "40-footers," or in their delivery trucks, or ponderous garbage trucks on their way to the Altamont landfill. Of course, we must make special mention of the drivers perched high in the cabs of the nearly ubiquitous double-bottom gravel trucks that seem to crowd this road day and night. People at risk on Vasco Road also include vacationers and tourists from other areas in California on their way to enjoy the Delta and to buy products from our local produce stands. Most obviously, people using Vasco Road to their peril include a lot of professionals on their way to and from jobs at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and hi-tech companies in the Pleasanton area and throughout Silicon Valley. Highway Patrol officers tell us that many of the accidents are caused when people drive too fast for conditions. Many of us are either a few minutes late for work in the morning, anxious to get home and relax in the evening, or just hurrying because dashing about has become the habitual way some of us live.



Frustrating view from the side mirror

Red brake lights, bumper to bumper congestion, some cars trying to sneak around the line, and everyone boiling.

Guaranteeing mayhem

(What everyone knows and nobody admits)

For 13 miles of its length — from the traffic light at Camino Diablo to the Alameda County Border — Vasco Road is an improved two-lane highway that could easily be driven (in the absence of traffic) at 90 miles an hour by any experienced driver. The road surface is smooth, traffic lanes are wide, and curves are gentle. In the absence of slower traffic or congestion the flow of traffic on Vasco Road often reaches 75 miles per hour. Sometimes more. All of us who drive it regularly have been passed by drivers doing 80–90 MPH. It's easy to drive that fast on that road as long as everything goes smoothly.

If a driver, in fact, keeps up with the flow of traffic it is typical, in my experience, to be able to drive the entire improved stretch at 70+ miles an hour and never encounter a slower vehicle, except on the uphill grades, which have passing lanes.

All of us who drive the road regularly know that if you drive even 65 in light traffic conditions on Vasco Road you will end up with a pickup truck, van, or even one of those double-bottom gravel trucks sitting right on your bumper trying to get you to move over or speed up. Of course, things go very unsmoothly indeed when any vehicle actually obeys the speed limit. A car going 55 MPH in the middle of a traffic stream that is attempting to go 75 MPH creates a scenario in which chaos can occur. The vehicle ends up after a few miles at the head of an ungraceful parade of impatient — in some cases enraged — drivers moving back and forth over the dividing line as they anxiously search for an opportunity to pass.

A dangerous situation!

Conditions on the narrow, winding, unimproved section of the road as you near Livermore are just as conducive to accidents. Big rigs crowd each other and no passing lanes are available on this stretch. The speed limit in this section drops to 35 mph and the unimpeded traffic flow typically moves at 60 MPH or more (except for the tightest curves). If any driver actually drives 35 MPH on the unimproved part, the speed differential (the "closing speed") with the other motorists trying to maintain the typical 60 MPH average, is almost doubled.

Of course, there will be drivers in any line of cars stacked up behind some conscientious law-abider who will always begin looking for ANY opportunity to pass the slower vehicle at the front of the line. Even if a marginal opportunity presents itself they will "put the peddle to the metal" and do anything to get to that blessed stretch of empty highway that the slower driver has, by now, swept out in front of him.

The people passing in this way are, in fact, able to make their marginal passing moves without smashing up their own and others' cars 999 times out of a thousand — which accounts for the fact that accidents typically happen on Vasco Road only every week or so, as somebody's luck runs out during one of those marginal passing attempts.

Regular commuters often comment that they are not surprised at the great number of accidents. What they ARE surprised about is that there are not a lot more of these. It is obvious to everyone who knows anything about Vasco Road that the real solution to the problem is to make the road four lanes from Brentwood to Livermore. Some residents and long-term users of the highway resent the fact that this wasn't done in 1996 when the 13 mile stretch of improved road was relocated by the Los Vaqueros Reservoir project. A lot of residents are wondering, in the words of Dylan, "How many deaths will it take till we know, That too many people have died?" Some people think that there have already been too many deaths.

Swimming in wet concrete — The glacial pace of any Vasco Road improvement
Vasco Road is obviously overdue for a major renovation. However, any changes require extensive coordination among Brentwood, Livermore, and Contra Costa and Alameda counties in order to facilitate the planning, design, construction, and above all, the financing of any Vasco Road improvements.

On February 13, 2001, the Brentwood City Council contracted with Gray Bowen and Company, Inc. to look at safety issues for Highway 4 and Vasco Road. A disappointing feature of the contract (for us lay people, at least) is Gray Bowen's frank admission:

This will be a very long involved process including strategic planning meetings, a magnitude of paperwork preparing estimates, technical reports, and coordination with Caltrans. It is no revelation to most of us that public works projects typically move at an absolutely drunken gait — staggering to the left, to the right, spinning around, falling down.... Any improvement to the Vasco roadway requires the approval of no fewer than eleven separate government agencies:

- 1. Alameda County Public Works Agency (PWA)**
- 2. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**
- 3. San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board**
- 4. NPDES Section 402**
- 5. US Fish and Wildlife Service**
- 6. California Transportation Commission**
- 7. California Department of Fish and Game**
- 8. City of Brentwood**
- 9. City of Antioch**
- 10. City of Oakley**
- 11. Contra Costa County**

In other words, before the section of the roadway going into Livermore with all the hills and tight turns can be fixed, both the Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, for example, have to demonstrate, each to their own satisfaction, that the environment in the North Livermore Hills won't be affected by straightening out the roadway.

And how many of us ever knew about NPDES (National Pollution Discharge and Elimination Service) and their Section 402 requirements? And who knows how many tests and separate research projects the scientists and technicians from NPDES are going to conduct before they will finally admit that straightening out the road isn't going to create any awful discharges of pollution?

One of the miraculous things about our modern society is not that public works projects move at a ponderous pace but that, with all the interlocking pieces to these truly gargantuan puzzles, anything ever gets done at all. Since we know that there is almost nothing in that area except some pastureland, a few scattered outbuildings, and the edge of the windmill farm, most of us can figure out that discharges of pollution isn't probably a major issue.

A constantly disappointing thing about all governmental oversight agencies, however, is that they control their own workflow. In other words, nothing can be done to improve Vasco Road through this stretch until the National Pollution Discharge and Elimination Service SAYS that there is no issue with discharge, no matter how obvious it seems to a layperson.

A plan to fix the worst part

One of the agencies involved in making improvements to Vasco Road is the Alameda County Public Works Agency (PWA), which developed a draft plan last year entitled, "Vasco Road Safety Improvement Phase 1." The plan offers a program for improving the most needy part of Vasco Road — the twisting narrow unimproved section just outside Livermore that we spoke of at the beginning of the article (between Mile Posts 3.0 and 4.3, if you have a surveyor's map of the area). This is the part of the road that squeezes suddenly into two narrow traffic lanes with limited-visibility curves and no shoulders.

The PWA plan for Vasco improvement in this report has four parts (quoted directly below):

1. To improve traffic safety by realigning a segment of the roadway to eliminate all existing tight curves;
2. To minimize traffic delays (due to traffic back up behind slow moving vehicles traveling in either direction by providing passing lanes at inclines;
3. To upgrade the roadway to current design standards by increasing the roadway curve radii and providing adequate shoulder width and sight distance; and
4. To accommodate future public transit on Vasco Road as a whole (this is the only section of Vasco Road where curves are too tight to accommodate buses.

Something to keep you awake at night

Whoever thinks about what would happen if (God forbid) some terrible disaster occurs — perhaps some widespread holocaust is perpetuated by a terrorist group — and it becomes necessary to evacuate the area? We would just die like rats in our homes or in the middle of the ensuing impossible traffic jams.

The insufficient traffic arteries around this area means we couldn't evacuate if we ever needed to. The issue raises again the annoying larger issue involving developers' ability to create new homes much faster than governments can develop infrastructure to accommodate the growth. Some people, of course, think there ought to be a law about this....

Fixing the Devil's road

Anybody who ever had to travel Vasco Road in a commute knows that a terrible part of the road is the traffic signal where Vasco crosses Camino Diablo (Devil's Road) just to the south of Brentwood. The traffic signal at this intersection often backs up the southbound traffic in the morning and the northbound traffic in the evening for miles. County engineers conducted a study of the intersection and gave it flunking grades for both morning and evening commutes, calling it one of the worst traffic problems in Contra Costa County.

The only really great solution would be to put in some kind of limited access intersection (e.g., a 'cloverleaf' or 'diamond' intersection). But lacking the kind of funds to implement a major solution like that, plans have been made for widening the north and south legs of Vasco Road to improve traffic flow and for reconfiguring the Camino Diablo lanes at that intersection.

Brentwood city officials and the East County Transit Authority jointly initiated a traffic study and sought funding for the project, which is being added to the county Board of Supervisors' project list. It was hoped that construction could be scheduled for this fall. But since the project hasn't been funded yet, it probably won't happen that soon.

A few behaviors that will help keep you alive even on Vasco Road

Never let other drivers scream and curse at you

I put this first because this is the one I think about most often when I'm driving. If another driver flips me off or honks his horn at me in an angry manner, I take it as a personal defeat. I analyze my actions and try to make changes in my behavior so that won't happen again. We all know about The Golden Rule — do to others as you want them to do to you. But when it comes to driving there is an even better rule than this. People call it the Platinum Rule — do to others as they want you to do to them.

Driving by the Platinum Rule decreases the chances of our killing someone or being killed by them. An enraged driver is a dangerous driver. Why should I unnecessarily put myself into this kind of danger?

Another thing about this second behavior

Homicidal maniacs drive down Vasco Road sometimes. Keep screaming at other drivers and flipping them off and some day you might run across one of these people. When that happens you might not actually survive the discovery. Never scream and curse at other drivers. This is the flip side of the first behavior, of course. Road rage is ridiculous. We all know that at some level, but any of us can still let ourselves get sucked in. An enraged driver is a dangerous driver, especially when that raving, ranting person is me. By meditation, prayer, counseling, whatever... we must take control of our emotions. Compassion, kindness, gentleness, and patience should become the hallmarks of our driving attitudes.

This second behavior is simply the way we should all drive. For example, we want other people to drive in a peaceable manner.

Keep up with the flow of traffic

The big problems on Vasco Road with speed come from the fact that the speed differential between two particular vehicles — the "closing speed" can be 30 miles an hour. This is a killer. All the drivers who righteously maintain the Vasco Road speed limit under all conditions know that they are, thereby, increasing the risk to themselves and to other drivers. An obvious solution is to not drive at the speed limit whenever doing so might cause an accident. Let's not do anything to increase the risk of being killed or killing someone else.

Pull over and let people pass

If you simply refuse to go the speed of the other traffic and end up with a row of angry drivers behind you, just pull over and let them pass. I know that this is not possible on most of the unimproved section of the road but it is easily done every place else. I think a lot of people who drive the speed limit congratulate themselves on being careful drivers, but those angry people in their rearview mirrors are dangerous. Some people feel they would rather die than let other drivers — "who are breaking the law, for crying out loud" — have the satisfaction of getting ahead of them. But I do this all the time. And, guess what.... It doesn't hurt at all. In fact, it makes me feel better about the situation

— and, of course, it makes the other drivers, who can now get on with their journey in an unimpeded fashion — feel good about me. (This is the most obvious application of the Platinum Rule I talked about earlier.)

And think about this: If you get stopped by a Highway Patrolman and have to go to six hours of traffic school some Saturday — figure an hour traveling to and from — it will take you 48 weeks to recover the time lost, at eight minutes twice a day. Drive by the numbers when you can Vasco road is only about 20 miles long. That means if you drive at 55 MPH (the posted speed limit) you'll arrive in 26 minutes, or so. At 80 MPH you do it in 18 minutes. The eight minutes (all right, nine minutes, since part of the road is 35 MPH) you save is hardly enough time to have a cup of coffee and talk about the Giants with a co-worker. Just slow down.

Never drive when drowsy or fatigued

Sit in the parking lot before you leave work and take a "power snooze," if you need to. Pull off the road and "catch 40 winks," if you find yourself becoming drowsy. Go to bed at a reasonable hour. Watching "Stupid Pet Tricks" when doing so is going to decrease your driving ability the next day is, itself, a pretty stupid 'trick.' Not only will remaining alert make you a safer driver, but this behavior will make you a better person to work with when you get to the job or to live with when you get home.

Never make a turn or lane-change without signaling

I think we Californians are some of the worst people in the whole world for neglecting turn-signals. We should try to cultivate the turn-signal habit. On Vasco Road, always signal lane changes and turns. Let the other guy know what you are doing. When I pass a car or truck I always signal a right turn before reentering the traffic lane. I don't know how much actual safety this buys me, but it makes me feel good to acknowledge that I'm aware of the other driver and am treating him as courteously as I can.

Building a fire under the Process

Brentwood resident Joanne Flynn is no longer content to let meandering bureaucratic processes take their leisurely course. Joanne's friend, Patricia Altman, was killed on Vasco Road on August 10 and the tragedy prompted Joanne and Patricia's husband, Jeff, to get involved in the Vasco Road improvement process by researching current improvement initiatives and directly contacting involved officials. Before the end of the month Joanne had voiced her concerns in a face-to-face meeting with Sen. Torlakson.

In part, perhaps, because of Joanne's tireless efforts, the State Legislature Appropriations Committee passed Bill SB 802 on August 29. SB 802 is a small but important step that designates both Vasco Road and Byron Highway (see the Drive4Life article in this issue) as "inter-regional routes" clearing the way for them to compete for State Transportation Improvement Program Funds.

Joanne has formed a committee she calls Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences (CRAVE). The committee has the goal of encouraging residents of Brentwood, Byron, Discovery Bay, Oakley, Antioch, and Pittsburg to unite behind the legislation. On September 9 Joanne hosted the first meeting of CRAVE in her Brentwood home. During the meeting she shared information about proposed improvements to Vasco Road. She has organized a letter-writing campaign encouraging Governor Davis to sign SB 802 into legislation and hopes personally to hand deliver them to the governor.°

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Thursday, Feb 05, 2004

Transportation & Growth

Posted on Thu, Sep. 18, 2003

CHP steps up Vasco Road speeding enforcement

By Scott Marshall
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

LIVERMORE - The Cessna 206 lifted off, traversed wind farms in the golden foothills of eastern Alameda County, skirted Los Vaqueros Reservoir and began stalking speeders on Vasco Road.

The CHP has begun intensive enforcement by air and applied for a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety to make Vasco Road a safety corridor, which will beef up patrols and fund public education and other enforcement.

"The idea is not numbers, the idea is having an effect on driving behavior on this road," said CHP spokesman Steve Creel. "This is the most critical issue we have right now."

The road below was a dark ribbon, changing from black to gray at the Alameda-Contra Costa line and dotted at one-mile intervals with white hash marks easily spotted from the aircraft.

Nearby cows were tiny from 2,500 feet, but the vehicles were easily visible. Flight Officer Anthony Bonilla was armed with a timer and a seconds-speed chart to calculate vehicles' speeds on the road below. Pilot Bruce Gibson was ready to single out motorists.

"We're paralleling the roadway with the aircraft, establishing (the plane's) ground speed in relation to the vehicle," Gibson said. "Normally, three or four units sit together (on the ground), and we bring the car to the units."

On Monday, the pilot and flight officer helped officers on motorcycles and in cars, who cited 27 people, including three whose licenses had been suspended. On Tuesday, they took reporters for short flights to demonstrate how they do it.

The intensified enforcement will continue through the rest of the year.

One person died on Vasco Road each year from 2000 to 2002. Then, between Memorial Day weekend and Aug. 11 this year, seven died.

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Speed was the primary factor in half of the 68 collisions on the road between Aug. 11, 2002, and Aug. 10 this year, according to the CHP.

Besides speeding, officers are focusing on violations that cause accidents: unsafe and illegal passing over double-yellow lines and reckless and aggressive driving, Creel said.

The safety corridor designation would mirror the state-funded corridor on Highway 4 between the San Joaquin County line and Brentwood and 18 others statewide since 1992.





Last week, more than 70 people met to discuss safety on Vasco Road with Jeff Altman, whose wife, Patricia, the mother of their five sons ages 4 to 17, was killed Aug. 11 on the road. At 7 p.m. Oct. 16, state legislators are expected at a Vasco Safety Forum at Liberty High School's performing arts center, 850 Second St., Brentwood.

Patricia Altman's best friend, Joanne Flynn, who with Jeff Altman formed CRAVE -- Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences -- fears Vasco Road traffic and wants a barrier installed down its middle.

"Here's the situation: I'll be doing 55. But there is someone on my tail," Flynn said. The tailgaters pass groups of cars, crossing double-yellow lines, according to Creel and Flynn.

"They just cannot handle the fact that I am doing the speed limit," she said.

Reach Scott Marshall at 925-945-4745 or smarshall2@ccetimes.com.

   
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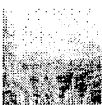
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Posted on Tue, Oct. 07, 2003

Safety measures for Vasco proposed

By Guy Ashley
CONTRA COSTA TIMES REPORTER

Drivers on Vasco Road in Alameda and Contra Costa counties may soon be asked to drive with their headlights on, even in broad daylight, in another gesture toward reducing traffic safety problems.

Supervisors in both counties today will consider measures to establish a "safety enhancement zone" along a 13-mile stretch of Vasco between Livermore and Brentwood, where drivers would be advised to switch on their headlights around the clock.

It was unclear Monday if the measure would involve passage of a new law that would carry possible sanctions for drivers who fail to activate their headlights, or would be an advisory measure only.

An aide to Contra Costa Supervisor Millie Greenberg said the measure would be advisory, while Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty said it could carry legal penalties.

California Highway Patrol Officer Steve Creel said he was waiting to receive the wording of the measures to be considered today.

The measures are the latest in a series of gestures local officials and the CHP are making to improve safety on Vasco in response to a spate of accidents, including three crashes between late May and early August that took a total of seven lives.

"We'll do whatever we can to remind people to drive safely out there," said Creel.

The reminder is necessary, Creel said, because Vasco is a main commute route for thousands of residents at the Bay Area's eastern edge. But it still is a relatively narrow road whose physical limitations make the freeway-driving mindset dangerous.

"You don't have unrestricted passing, and it can't be driven at unrestricted speeds," Creel said. "It's not a freeway."

The CHP recently embarked on an intensified enforcement that includes more patrol cars on the ground and the occasional use of an airplane to spot scofflaws overhead.

One person died on Vasco Road each year from 2000 to 2002. Then, between Memorial Day weekend and Aug. 11 this year, seven died. Speed was the primary factor in half of the 68 collisions on the road between Aug. 11, 2002, and Aug. 10 this year, according to the CHP.

Asking drivers to turn on their headlights during the day is something that has been tried on other problem roadways, including state Highway 4 in Contra Costa County and state Highway 37 between Vallejo and Novato.

Authorities say they have no statistics that link safety to daytime headlight use, but said they believe such

programs tell drivers to be especially cautious.

"If nothing else, it sends a subliminal message," said Haggerty.

Haggerty said officials are mulling the possibility of doubling fines for vehicle-code violations along Vasco. He said he's inclined to support such action if traffic problems don't improve significantly.

"I don't know how else you get to these people and their poor driving behavior," Haggerty said. "Maybe if we hit them in the pocketbook they'll wake up and see that safety is the most important thing, not getting there a couple of minutes faster."

MEETINGS

Alameda County supervisors meet at 9:30 a.m., fifth floor board chamber, 1221 Oak St., Oakland

Contra Costa supervisors meet at 9:30 a.m., board chamber, 651 Pine St., Martinez.

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Posted on Fri, Nov. 07, 2003

Supervisor: Vasco Road upgrades are under way

WHILE I'M NEW to Far East County as your supervisor, I'm not new to Vasco Road. I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you about the partnerships that have been formed among Contra Costa County, Sen. Tom Torlakson, Assemblyman Guy Houston, Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty and the California Highway Patrol, to move forward with safety improvements to Vasco Road.

I sit on the Tri-Valley Transportation Council (Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin, San Ramon, Danville, Alameda and Contra Costa counties), where in April of this year we discussed how -- in the absence of state money -- to fund the Alameda County curve-straightening project on Vasco Road.

Also, within a few days of being appointed as your county supervisor in mid-July, I asked the TRANSPLAN board (the East Contra Costa transportation planning group) to consider helping fund the curve-straightening improvements. Board members invited representatives from Alameda County to their September meeting, and are considering providing funding for this project.

A number of improvements have already been made. The most consistent concern expressed by constituents since the time District 3 was expanded to include Brentwood, October 2001, was for the county to do something about the Vasco Road-Camino Diablo intersection.

Improvements are now under way and, when completed, we expect traffic will move more smoothly, eliminating the current interminable delays.

Other improvements are already in place, including signing and striping for aerial enforcement by the CHP and double yellow no-passing lines at various locations. In early October, Supervisor Haggerty and I asked our respective boards to approve a daylight headlight zone, "Lights on for Safety," to remind people to drive safely. The signs went up in both counties a week later.

The next phase is to build on the significant collaborative effort under way to identify and put in place operational and safety improvements to reduce speeding and head-on accidents. The urgency of these improvements is unmistakable. I asked the board of supervisors, and it agreed, to request that Sen. Torlakson sponsor legislation to designate Vasco Road as a safety corridor and establish a double-fine zone.

To move forward in a timely manner, Contra Costa County will use an outside engineering company to focus exclusively on determining the best locations for safety improvements such as radar speed identification signs, rumble strips, fog reflectors and jersey barriers in order to eliminate head-on collisions and close calls. We want to make certain that the most effective safety measures are used in the right places, and that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

The city of Brentwood has graciously offered to loan the county \$1.5 million for safety improvements, and we look forward to working with the city to build a safer Vasco Road.

We are also forming a Vasco Road Advisory Task Force that will be made up of residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties along with CHP. The task force will identify additional safety improvements and carry out an action plan that includes engineering, enforcement and education. If you would like to be part of the task force, please contact my Brentwood office at 925-240-7260.

I want to emphasize that the degree of collaboration among levels of government on this problem is unprecedented, and I look forward to communicating with you on a regular basis to update you on our progress in making Vasco Road safer for all of us.

As the county supervisor for District 3, Millie Greenberg represents residents in Brentwood, Discovery Bay, Byron, the San Ramon Valley and part of Walnut Creek.

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Posted on Wed, Jan. 14, 2004

Task force takes on Vasco problems

By Rowena Coetsee
STAFF WRITER

BRENTWOOD - Len Ferrier isn't about to put money on whether a proposed law to curb aggressive drivers on Vasco Road actually will work.

"It's just a Band-Aid," Ferrier said of the legislation that state Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, introduced last week.

Senate Bill 1084 would double the base fine not only for speeding but any kind of traffic violation on this arterial route that has become the bane of many East County residents' commute.

But Ferrier doubts that going after the pocketbooks of people unwilling to change their driving habits will make much of a difference.

"You've got some crazy drivers out there," said the Brentwood resident, who's had more than one unnerving encounter with tailgaters and lead-foot drivers passing on the shoulder or crossing a double yellow line.

Ferrier's pessimism about the effectiveness of legislating behavior doesn't mean he has given up on conditions ever improving, however.

Last month he and his wife attended the first meeting of some public officials and their constituents who have mobilized to brainstorm ways of slowing drivers down and reducing the number of accidents on Vasco Road.

The Vasco Road Safety Task Force includes two Alameda and Contra Costa county supervisors, as well as California Highway Patrol officers and public works employees from the two jurisdictions.

The group represents a joint venture because Vasco Road traverses both counties.

Also at that meeting were a couple of Brentwood residents who have been lobbying hard for safety improvements since a 36-year-old Brentwood mother of five was killed on Vasco Road five months ago.

Calling themselves Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences, the two neighbors -- one of them the victim's husband - have attended Brentwood City Council meetings as well as those of a regional transportation committee that represents East County's interests.

Jeff Altman and Joanne Flynn also met with Torlakson and District 3 county Supervisor Millie Greenberg.

They also created a Web site to keep the public informed about what government officials are doing about Vasco Road.

"(They) made it very difficult for people to ignore what's going on out there," said Brentwood assistant city engineer Paul Eldridge.

Altman went public with his campaign when he told his story at a council meeting two weeks after his wife's death.

Spurred on by Altman and Flynn as well as highly publicized reports of two other accidents, both triple fatalities, on Vasco Road last summer, government agencies have taken a number of steps.

Task force takes on Vasco problems

"My philosophy is action, not talk. I'm tired of talk," he said. "(I want to) get down to the nuts and bolts -- what we're going to do, when and how."

Reach Rowena Coetsee at 925-779-7141 or rcoetsee@cctimes.com



Mary NEJEDLY PIEPHO

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Vasco Road Safety Improvements

Response to a letter to the editor written by Mr. LaFond

Dear Editor, I'd like to correct Mr. La Fond's mis-statements that were published in your Letters to the Editor in last week's issue of the Press.

I'm not sure who is providing Mr. La Fond with his information, but it is absolutely incorrect and his sources should be questioned. The ugly reality is that a solid barrier does not cost \$90 million dollars. \$90 million dollars is the cost to re-engineer and re-construct Vasco Road so it can accommodate the solid barrier.

At the Brentwood Council meeting of April 13 I expressed concern under public comment that rumble strips and quadruple solid yellow lines did nothing to stop the driver that hit my husband head-on, from coming across the highway and nearly taking his life. I offer my letter in its entirety for your readers to read for themselves what my comments were, and I continue to stand by them.

Statement to the Brentwood City Council

"Mayor, council members, and city staff, thank you for this opportunity.

I am Mary Piepho, a resident of Discovery Bay and vice chair of the Byron School District Board of Trustees. I am also a mother and the wife of a victim of Highway 4. I simply want you, and those present, to understand that a double row of rumble strips did not prevent the vehicle cross-over accident that clearly could have taken my husband's life.

We were lucky. The driver of the vehicle that hit my husband was in a smaller-sized SUV, my husband was wearing his seat-belts and his vehicle contained airbags.

These circumstances combined to save his life. A double-row of solid yellow lines, and a double-row of "safety-improved" rumble strips, did not.

There have been many accidents on Highway 4 between Brentwood and Discovery Bay. My family fought to secure the Highway 4 Safety Improvements, and they were and are very successful.

However, last month, a young man crossed over the road again and was tragically killed. Rumble strips would not have saved him. A solid divided road would have.

I can highlight at least two other instances, where cross-over accidents occurred in straight sections of the Highway, where double solid lines and a double row of rumble strips are installed, resulting in both accidents taking the lives of the drivers.

I caution you, and those in this room, to not stop at rumble strips as a safety measure on Vasco Road. While they are a safety enhancement, they simply will not eliminate cross-over collisions.

Unfortunately, it will take another accident, another potential life or lives lost, and/or maimed, to highlight the inadequacy of this proposal as a realistic safety measure that will protect the citizens of Brentwood, Discovery Bay, far East County and East County from cross-over incidents.

I urge you, as we travel this dangerous road together, to be safe

Mille Greenberg has announced she will not participate in three candidate forums scheduled before the Nov. 2 election. Events sponsored by the chambers of commerce in Brentwood and San Ramon and the Industrial Association of Contra Costa will go on without her. See full article.

Dave Hudson, former Supervisor Candidate and current Vice-Mayor, City of San Ramon adds his endorsement:

"I endorse Mary Nejedly Piepho for District 3 Supervisor of Contra Costa County."



The San Ramon Valley Herald says:

"Piepho offers leadership experience, deep community roots, a tradition of public service. More, she can provide the back-bone for some of the other supervisors who are content to 'go along'"

and continue to fight for the correct and necessary safety improvements, the safety improvements that ENSURE we arrive home safely, and not simply in the memories of our loved ones."

Mary Nejedly Piepho

with the pack." View the article.

Piepho pledges not to accept funds from developers, labor unions, refineries. See the San Ramon Valley Herald article by Tamara Grippi

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Tri-Valley Herald

Concrete divider costly for Vasco Road

Brentwood's loan not enough for expensive center barrier

By Tamara Grippi
STAFF WRITER

Friday, February 27, 2004 - The city of Brentwood's offer of a \$1.5 million loan to improve safety on Vasco Road only will pay for a fraction of the cost to install a concrete barrier along several miles of the dangerous corridor, according to Contra Costa County officials.

The county, which hired a consultant to study an array of safety improvements along Vasco Road, has learned that adding a concrete divider would require widening the road and installing a new structural foundation.

"It's a lot more complicated than putting down a concrete barrier and re-striping," said Bill Fernandez, a senior civil engineer for the county's Public Works Department.

In October, the city of Brentwood offered the county a \$1.5 million, 10-year, interest-free loan to fund safety improvements along Vasco.

The offer was intended to pay for construction of the barrier along a particularly troublesome stretch of Vasco, approximately four miles long, according to Brentwood City Councilwoman Annette Beckstrand.

Brentwood's offer is good until April 14, six months after the day it was extended.

"We're waiting for the county to decide how many more lives they're willing to risk," Beckstrand said.

The county, which is looking at various options to improve safety, hopes to present a report, prepared by Nolte and Associates, at the March 15 meeting of the Vasco Road Safety Task Force.

The decision to accept the loan will depend on whether the county and the city of Brentwood can reach consensus on how the money would be spent, said Contra Costa County Administrator John Sweeten.

Clearly, the money won't be enough to pay for the installation of the barriers, which initial estimates put at well over \$10 million, according to Maurice Shiu, county public works director.

"I think it was very generous of the city to offer that assistance on a no-interest basis," Sweeten said. "It provides an opportunity to combine it with other limited funds to make improvements to Vasco," Sweeten said.

A center barrier has been on the wish list of safety advocate Joanne Flynn, whose best friend, Patricia Altman, was killed on Vasco Road in August. A total of seven people were killed on Vasco Road in 2003.

Flynn is also hoping for other safety features such as "center line rumble strips," to warn motorists who are drifting out of their lanes.

That improvement, considerably less expensive than the barrier, stands a better chance of going forward at the moment. Those stripes are one of the improvements the county is considering, along with the possibility of prohibiting cars from passing on Vasco, Fernandez said.

Also the California Highway Patrol has increased its presence in the area and the county plans to set up two radar speed signs, to announce to drivers when they're exceeding the speed limit.

The city of Brentwood has been particularly concerned about Vasco because so many of its residents drive the road on a daily basis, Beckstrand said.

"We can't legally go out there with our trucks and do the work," she said. "It's outside our city limits."

Meanwhile state Sen. Tom Torlakson's bill to designate Vasco Road as a "double fine" zone is scheduled to be heard by the state Senate's Transportation Committee next month.

A similar bill that designated a portion of Highway 4 between Brentwood and Discovery Bay as a safety corridor has had dramatic effects on reducing accidents, said Torlakson's press secretary Robert Oakes.

While four fatalities and 30 injury accidents occurred on that section of Highway 4 in 2002, no fatalities and just 13 collisions happened in 2003, when the legislation went into effect, Oakes said.

Tamara Grippi covers Contra Costa County. She can be reached at (925) 416-4882 or at tgrippi@angnewspapers.com.

Tri-Valley Herald

Vasco safety report to be released

Consultant to present initial report at Vasco Road Advisory Task Force meeting Monday

By Tamara Grippi
STAFF WRITER

Sunday, March 14, 2004 -

Vasco Road safety advocates are eagerly awaiting the findings of a Contra Costa County-sponsored study on the dangerous corridor.

Nolte and Associates, the Walnut Creek-based consultant hired by the county to examine the corridor, will present the initial report at the meeting of the Vasco Road Advisory Task Force, which begins at 7 p.m. Monday at 101 San Creek Road, Suite B, in Brentwood.

The consultant examined collision data to determine if there were areas of the road in which accidents were concentrated, and developed a list of potential safety improvements, said Supervisor Millie Greenberg of Danville.

"This is an extremely important step," said Greenberg, who convened the advisory group along with Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty.

"If the task force supports the recommendations, then we can move forward with the design and construction. The sooner we make Vasco Road safer, the better."

After the task force reviews the findings and offers its own recommendations, the Vasco Road safety report would next go before the city of Brentwood and the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

In putting together the report, the consultant has met with the California Highway Patrol, the county planning department, Brentwood's city staff, Caltrans and the East Contra Costa Fire District.

In October, the city of Brentwood offered the county a \$1.5 million, 10-year, interest-free loan to fund safety improvements along Vasco. That offer is good until April 14, six months after the day it was extended.

Task force member Joanne Flynn was concerned that the release of the report is cutting it close with the deadline to accept the loan. Flynn, whose best friend Patricia Altman was killed in an accident on Vasco Road in August, has been hoping for improvements such as a center barrier and "center line rumble strips" to warn motorists who are drifting out of their lanes.

County officials already have indicated that the structural work necessary to install center barriers will cost considerably more than \$1.5 million.

Meanwhile, state Sen. Tom Torlakson's bill to designate Vasco Road as a "double fine" zone is scheduled to be heard Tuesday by the state Senate's Transportation Committee.

The road claimed seven lives in 2003, and Flynn hopes to see it become safer sooner rather than later.

"We want the improvements to happen ASAP," Flynn said. "They have the means and opportunity right now to make it safe."

Tamara Grippi covers Contra Costa County. She can be reached at (925) 416-4882 or at tgrippi@angnewspapers.com.

Oakland Tribune

Study due to be released on safety of Vasco Road

By Tamara Grippi

STAFF WRITER

Monday, March 15, 2004 - Vasco Road safety advocates are eagerly awaiting the findings of a Contra Costa County-sponsored study on the dangerous corridor.

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County officials already have indicated that the structural work necessary to install center barriers will cost considerably more than \$1.5 million.

Meanwhile, state Sen. Tom Torlakson's bill to designate Vasco Road as a "double fine" zone is

scheduled to be heard by the state Senate's Transportation Committee Tuesday.

Greenberg and Altman's husband, Jeff, both are scheduled to testify before that committee.

The road claimed seven lives in 2003, and Flynn hopes to see it become safer sooner rather than later.

"We want the improvements to happen ASAP," she said. "They have the means and opportunity right now to make it safe."

Tamara Grippi covers Contra Costa County. She can be reached at (925) 416-4882 or at tgrippi@angnewspapers.com.

Tri-Valley Herald

Study finds median too costly

Installing concrete barrier along shortest stretch of Vasco Road would be \$4.7 million

By Tamara Grippi
STAFF WRITER

Tuesday, March 16, 2004 - BRENTWOOD -- Vasco Road safety advocates were exasperated Monday by a Contra Costa County-sponsored report pointing to the prohibitive costs of installing a concrete median along the dangerous corridor.

The report, presented by Nolte and Associates of Walnut Creek, was presented at the Vasco Road Advisory Task Force meeting in Brentwood.

According to the presentation narrated by consultant Trudy Presser, the minimum cost just to install a concrete median along the shortest stretch of Contra Costa's 11-mile Vasco territory would cost \$4.7 million.

The consultant estimated the cost to install the concrete barrier along the entire county road along with other improvements, could be \$94 million.

Several members of the task force were dubious of the report.

"I think you completely missed the point," said Annette Beckstrand, vice-mayor of Brentwood. "Five months ago, the city of Brentwood came forward to offer \$1.5 million to put concrete barriers out there. Our intent was not to have something perfect. What we wanted to do was save a few lives."

Beckstrand and others were not convinced that the project to install center medians would need to include expensive road widening and structural improvements to meet Caltrans guidelines.

They pointed to Highway 17 in Santa Cruz, which is separated by a center barrier, but is clearly not up to Caltrans standards. The consultant noted that Highway 17's safety measures were undertaken before Caltrans' current standards were put in place.

As an alternative to the expensive prospect of installing a center divide, the consultant recommended the installation of rumble strips that would warn motorists who drift out of their lane, a project estimated at \$780,000.

Again, participants were dubious.

David Piepho, who was severely injured when his car was hit head-on by a wayward vehicle on Highway 4, said the rumble strips won't stop drivers from moving into the opposing lanes.

"The concrete barriers knock cars back into their own lanes," he said. "The rumble strips don't do that."

Residents and officials alike have been very concerned about the dangers facing drivers on Vasco Road. In 2003, seven people were killed in automobile accidents along the dangerous corridor.

In October, the city of Brentwood offered the county a \$1.5 million 10-year, interest-free loan to fund safety improvements along Vasco. That offer is good until April 14, six months after the day it was extended.

The City Council had hoped that the \$1.5 million would be used to pay for a center divide along the most dangerous four miles of Vasco, south of Camino Diablo. It remains to be seen whether the city will approve the loan for other improvements.

In the meantime, the California Highway Patrol has increased its presence in the area and the county plans to set up two radar speed signs, to announce to drivers when they're exceeding the speed limit.

State Sen. Tom Torlakson's bill to designate Vasco Road as a "double fine" zone is scheduled to be heard today by the state Senate's Transportation Committee.

Supervisor Millie Greenberg of Danville is scheduled to testify.

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Posted on Wed, Mar. 17, 2004

Vasco Road safety could be costly

By Rowena Coetsee
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

EAST CONTRA COSTA COUNTY - Residents pushing to make Vasco Road safer were frustrated and disappointed this week when they learned what it could cost to prevent head-on collisions.

The price tag of erecting a concrete median barrier along all 16 miles of the arterial route would be around \$94 million, according to a Walnut Creek engineering consulting firm Contra Costa County hired to calculate the cost of adding various safety features.

Joann Flynn, a member of the Vasco Road Safety Task Force, was dismayed by the estimate, calling it "out of reality."

"The costs are completely inflated," said Flynn, a Brentwood resident who has been pressing public officials to do something about the issue since a 36-year-old mother of five was killed on Vasco Road in August.

Representatives from state, county and city agencies attended the task force's Monday meeting where Nolte and Associates Inc. presented its price breakdown.

Of the 22 safety improvements the company considered, the least costly was adding two "passing lane ahead" signs for \$850.

Other possibilities included adding raised dots or reflective markers to the existing double-yellow line and increased California Highway Patrol presence along Vasco Road.

In the end, the firm recommended replacing the double-yellow line with "rumble strips" along the whole corridor except for the passing zones.

The parallel set of raised, grooved strips is intended to discourage motorists from passing illegally

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and get distracted drivers' attention.

The approximately \$786,000 solution also would entail posting additional "passing lane ahead" and "do not pass" signs.

But erecting a barrier along the entire length of Vasco Road is the only solution that will satisfy Discovery Bay Councilman David Piepho.

"Knowing what a head-on collision is like, there's nothing short of putting in that concrete divider that's going to solve the problem," he said.

Piepho, also a member of the task force, was involved in a head-on collision on Highway 4 in September 2001 when an oncoming motorist took her eyes off the road and veered across the dividing line.

Piepho suffered broken bones and now has a titanium rod in his right leg.

Flynn, by contrast, says she would just as soon have the county tackle some of the less costly proposals than spend time and money studying options it simply cannot afford.

Vasco Road has been the subject of intense public debate since seven people died on the two-lane county road last summer.

An average of 21,744 drivers traveled Vasco Road during a 24-hour period, according to the county public works department's latest traffic count study in November 2003.

Meanwhile, time is running out for the county to accept the city of Brentwood's offer of a 10-year, zero-interest loan of \$1.5 million.

The money would be earmarked for safety improvements to Vasco Road.

The city gave the county six months to start construction when it extended the offer Oct. 14, 2003.

With the deadline rapidly approaching and no date scheduled for the county Board of Supervisors to accept the city's offer, however, city staff members are planning to ask the Brentwood City Council for an extension at its April 13 meeting, said city engineer Bailey Grewal.

The county has indicated that the loan would accelerate whatever work is done, he said, adding that the city is expecting the county to make the improvements this summer.

The county already has ordered two radar feedback signs that it hopes to receive by the end of this month and install immediately, said Deputy Public Works Director Julie Bueren.

The speed limit on nearly all of the portion of Vasco Road in Contra Costa County is 55 mph; the maximum speed is 50 mph on a very small section near the Alameda County border.

Reach Rowena Coetsee at 925-779-7141 or rcoetsee@cctimes.com.

IF YOU GO

- **WHAT:** Vasco Road Safety Task Force meets to discuss information on what other counties have done to make arterial routes in their jurisdiction safer.

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Posted on Fri, Apr. 16, 2004

Extension OK'd for Vasco Road loan

By Melissa Moy
STAFF WRITER

BRENTWOOD - Contra Costa County leaders made an 11th-hour plea Tuesday, asking Brentwood leaders to give part of a \$1.5 million interest-free loan that would pay for rumble strips on Vasco Road.

One condition of the loan had required that construction begin before Wednesday, when the loan offer expired.

The county -- which is responsible for maintenance of the dangerous, curving commuter road -- intends to use \$786,000 to pay for rumble strips, not concrete barriers, Supervisor Millie Greenberg said.

"Barriers would cost too much," Greenberg said. "We can do (the rumble strips) now."

Brentwood City Council members agreed to give the money for the rumble strips and granted a six-month extension for the remaining \$714,000 of the loan offer.

A concrete barrier in the middle of the road would cost \$94.1 million, and the county plans to focus on immediate improvements that could help reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on Vasco. The twisting 11-mile road connects the Tri-Valley to East Contra Costa County.

The county Board of Supervisors expects to formally accept Brentwood's loan at its April 27 meeting.

Construction of the strips is expected to begin in July, when the county will plans to coat the road with a protective sealant.

When Greenberg only requested money for the rumble strips, Councilman Bill Hill urged county officials to find other Vasco ideas that could benefit from the money. He acknowledged the loan would not pay for large-scale projects, but said immediate road improvements would help save lives.

Rumble strips are not enough to save lives, several residents said.

The strips, or grooved indentations in the road, are not enough to prevent cars from drifting over them, Discovery Bay resident Mary Piepho said. She described how her husband, Discovery Bay town board director David Piepho, was fortunate to survive a crash on Highway 4 a few years ago. David's seat belt and air bags saved him, not the rumble strips, she said.

Some Brentwood leaders and residents said they still want to pursue the concrete barriers. Mayor Brian Swisher, who owns a cement business, said the Vasco estimates are inflated.

Brentwood resident Jeff Altman said he wants Vasco safety projects to move quicker. "It would be nice to talk about things we've done rather than things we're going to do," said Altman, a tireless Vasco safety advocate since his wife, Patricia, was killed in a Vasco crash last year.

Councilwoman Ana Gutierrez said she hoped rumble strips would be the first of many Vasco improvements. "A small step is better than no step," she said. "I want to move forward now."

Rumble strips have helped save lives on Highway 12 in Napa County, and county leaders said they are optimistic that the strips will help keep Vasco drivers alert and prevent cars from drifting across the mostly two-lane road.

Some members of the Vasco Road task force, which advises the county Board of Supervisors, have endorsed the rumble strip project. The task force includes residents, the California Highway Patrol and county firefighters.

A series of fatal Vasco crashes last year, including the death of Patricia Altman, a 36-year-old mother of five, prompted Brentwood officials to turn up the heat on the county. In October, Brentwood offered the loan in an effort to spur road improvements.



Posted on Sun, May. 09, 2004

Despite growth curbs, expect tens of thousands to pour in

By Kiley Russell
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

The rules that govern how and where cities can grow have changed since the older, western suburbs matured, but Eastern Contra Costa County's population boom is poised to continue well into the future.

Despite sundry land use restrictions, East County, now home to about 235,000 people, is expected to add about 80,000 new residents by 2015, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments.

"In the last few years, you've seen a variety of ballot measures to limit growth and county efforts to limit growth in certain areas. There's been a much more active discussion about controlling and shaping growth," said Paul Fassinger, the association's research director.

Brentwood, Antioch and the county all have some kind of growth control measure in place. Oakley has preserved 1,200 acres of prime real estate as open space, and three countywide ballot measures that focus on growth controls or that have growth control provisions are expected to be headed to a vote this year.

Brentwood, Oakley, Pittsburg and the county are working on a voluntary habitat conservation plan to preserve up to 34,800 acres of open space. Contra Costa set aside 11,000 acres southeast of Brentwood to be used exclusively as farmland and the city of Brentwood has a new agricultural land trust program.

While voters are receptive to "local control" and property rights rhetoric, political candidates in East County are more likely to be rewarded by the electorate when they talk about growth controls or "smart growth" principals than they were in the past.

"In times gone past, you saw very subtle messages about growth. Now, people are starting to act out more about it," said Federal Glover, a county supervisor whose district includes Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley and Bethel Island.

"We know we're going to have to revisit where the (urban limit) line is because of housing, but we can't turn our backs on the fact that we don't have the transportation infrastructure and other infrastructure that can accommodate more growth," Glover said.

That is a sentiment expressed regularly by city and county officials, yet each incorporated city has plans to annex more land or to move the urban limit line, which is intended to keep suburban development in check. Each city has plenty of tract home development and strip malls planned for the next 10 to 20 years and the county has plans for thousands of new homes west of Discovery Bay as well as between Bethel Island and Oakley.

The pressures to build are intense, local decision makers say.

There are the state Department of Housing and Community Development's "fair share" housing goals for each city. There is the economic imperative of a cash-strapped state government dipping into local tax revenues more and more, which makes developer fees more and more attractive to cities.

There is the broadly accepted philosophical tenet that local land use decisions should be made by local elected officials, many of whom are responding to market and regional migration factors when they approve new housing in their towns.

"How do you say no to development when you have all these other things telling you that you need to build?" said Brentwood Mayor Brian Swisher.

So while residents bitterly complain about the gridlock on Highway 4 and dangerously overcrowded Vasco Road, packed schools and the loss of the area's rural and blue-collar roots, the growth won't end for years to come.

That hasn't stopped environmental groups from trying to corral suburban development in the region.

"I'm hoping the urban limit line doesn't move in that area. I'm hoping that there's enough public support for better land use policies in that area that actually Brentwood and Antioch adopt their own growth boundaries," said Evelyn Stivers of Greenbelt Alliance.

Besides, "the fights are narrowing" because not much land is left that hasn't been developed, zoned for development or protected, Stivers said.

Antioch's last real fight on the suburban fringe is over the 2,165 acres to its east known as Roddy Ranch and the adjacent 1,070 acres of the Ginochio property, both of which the city would like to develop as "exclusive," high-end residential neighborhoods.

"Other than the agricultural core, (Brentwood) has nowhere to go so it shouldn't be so hard for them in the next 10 years to decided not to destroy their ag core," Stivers said. "It's no longer the case that everything between Mount Diablo and the cities is up for grabs."

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Oakland Tribune

Radar signs draw criticism from safety group

Advocates say Vasco displays not activated during weekends, are sometimes incorrect when lit

By Tamara Grippi
STAFF WRITER

Monday, May 10, 2004 - Safety advocate Joanne Flynn, who lost her best friend in a car accident on Vasco Road last August, worries that newest improvements to the dangerous corridor -- "radar feedback signs" -- are not doing their job.

A Brentwood resident, Flynn is most concerned that the signs, designed to flash the speed of passing motorists, are not activated during the most dangerous times -- weekends.

Flynn's best friend, Patricia Altman, 36, was killed on a Sunday afternoon, when her car collided with a utility trailer that had broken loose from a truck traveling in the opposite direction.

With summer quickly approaching, Flynn is concerned that the biggest threat to safety may come from recreation seekers, not weekday commuters.

"With the tourist season starting, people with boats are coming to Discovery Bay and the road is cluttered with people who don't know how to drive," Flynn said.

In addition, Flynn and other members of the Vasco Safety Task Force are concerned that the signs have been malfunctioning. Flynn and Discovery Bay resident David Piepho say they have both witnessed the signs flashing speeds quite different than those registered on their speedometers.

"I have yet to see the signs work correctly," Piepho said.

Contra Costa County Deputy Public Works Director Julie Bueren already has asked the county's signal maintenance shop to examine the signs, which were installed about a month ago, to follow up on the complaints of malfunctioning.

Bueren said the county is open to the idea of activating the signs on weekends and has asked Contra Costa's traffic engineer to consult with the California Highway Patrol about the best time for clocking drivers.

"Initially, we were trying to target as many people as possible," she said. "When you have the most people on the road is peak hours. That was our initial cut with the CHP, but that can be revised and modified."

The solar-powered signs are limited by their battery storage capability, which allows for 45 hours a week of operation.

The county is hoping to beef up the battery storage, to keep the signs powered up for longer periods of time.

"We're trying to be as responsive as we can (to residents' suggestions)," Bueren said. "People driving there every day have a better sense than we do."

The radar sign tracking southbound drivers is located about 1.4 miles south of the Camino Diablo intersection on Vasco, while the sign clocking northbound drivers is near Brushy Creek.

The county still is trying to work out some of the kinks out of the radar feedback signs, which were installed in early April.

"The signs are a work in progress," said county Supervisor Millie Greenberg, who is hopeful the county will be able to power the signs for longer hours. "We are trying to make them work as best they can."

The county spent close to \$10,000 to purchase one sign and received the second one free of charge thanks to a grant made available by the manufacturer.

Vasco Road is a major route linking eastern Contra Costa County with southern Alameda County. Safety along the road has become a high profile issue, particularly after seven people were killed in automobile accidents along the corridor in 2003.

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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Officials urge governor to lay off transit funding

Plan to redirect \$2 billion threatens key projects, they say

Erin Hallissy, Chronicle Staff Writer

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

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URL: sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2004/05/11/BAG856JEF11.DTL

A bipartisan group of elected officials in Contra Costa County, from small city councils to the U.S. Congress, appealed Monday to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger not to raid transportation money to close the state budget deficit.

Schwarzenegger's proposal to move \$2 billion from transportation to the general fund could endanger critical projects including the widening of chronically congested Highway 4 in eastern Contra Costa, improving safety on dangerous Vasco Road between Brentwood and Livermore and extending a westbound carpool lane on Interstate 80, the lawmakers said.

"We as a group don't always agree on every issue," says the letter, hand-delivered to the governor's office by Assemblyman Joe Canciamilla, D-Pittsburg. "But on this issue, we are speaking with one united voice."

The letter says proceeding with the transportation projects "would hasten the economic recovery, create dozens of construction jobs and add needed revenue to our local and state governments."

Among those who signed are U.S. Reps. George Miller, D-Martinez, and Ellen Tauscher, D-Walnut Creek; state Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch; Canciamilla; Assemblyman Guy Houston, R-San Ramon; Contra Costa Supervisors Federal Glover of Pittsburg and Millie Greenberg of Danville; and mayors and city council members from Antioch, Pittsburg, Brentwood and Oakley.

"Together, we represent over 1.2 million Californians," said Glover, chairman of the county Board of Supervisors and the letter's author. "It's time East County benefited from this extraordinary political influence and spoke with one voice when it comes to East County traffic solutions."

H.D. Palmer, deputy director of the state Department of Finance, said raiding transportation funds was "one of the difficult decisions the governor had to make in January."

He would not say whether the governor, who will announce his May budget revisions Thursday, had changed his mind, but he said other legislators had raised concerns about taking money from highway and transit projects.

"Clearly, we hear them," Palmer said. "We are aware of them."

Suspending Proposition 42, approved by voters in 2002 to dedicate gas sales taxes to highway and transit improvements, requires a two-thirds vote of the state Legislature. Dozens of approved projects throughout the Bay Area could be delayed or halted if it is suspended.

Canciamilla said transportation had long topped the list of concerns for eastern Contra Costa County residents, who spend hours fighting traffic on the four-lane Highway 4.

"Everybody got together because of the importance of transportation in the region," Canciamilla said. "This is a first round to reinforce to the governor that there's a real concern about what's happening. This

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY / Officials urge governor to lay off transit funding / Plan to redirect \$2 bill... Page 2 of 2
isn't a Republican or Democratic issue. This is a transportation issue."

E-mail Erin Hallissy at ehallissy@sfgate.com.

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Tri-Valley Herald

Senate OKs double-fine zone for Vasco

By Tamara Grippi
STAFF WRITER

Thursday, May 20, 2004 - The state Senate approved a bill Tuesday to declare the entire length of Vasco Road a double-fine zone.

The Senate voted 26-12 in support of the legislation sponsored by state Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch. The bill would double the fines for all major traffic violations along Vasco Road, where seven people were killed in automobile accidents in 2003.

Safety advocate Joanne Flynn, who lost her best friend, Patricia Altman, in a vehicle accident on Vasco last August, was encouraged by the news. The bill likely will make it to the Assembly floor by mid-summer, according to Robert Oakes, press secretary to Torlakson.

If signed into law, the double-fine zone would go into effect next January.

"It's imperative that this bill gets passed, and I'm sure it will," Flynn said. "It's unfortunate, but this hits people in the wallet and they don't like that."

Any violations that would currently warrant tickets would be subject to the double fine, Oakes said.

"The biggest problems on Vasco have been speeding, illegal passing and unsafe lane changes," he said. "All of those would get the double fine."

In the months following Altman's death, a Vasco Road safety task force, convened by Contra Costa Supervisor Millie Greenberg and Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, began to tackle the problem of the dangerous corridor.

The 16-mile road has become a major route linking eastern Contra Costa County with southern Alameda County.

The California Highway Patrol has stepped up its patrols. In the first four months of this year, 700 tickets were written, said CHP Officer Cliff Kroeger.

"People are noticing the presence out there," he said.

Though the task force originally advocated the installation of a center divider, a Contra Costa County-sponsored study indicated the cost would be prohibitive.

Instead, the county is moving forward with a plan to install bumpy, grooved "rumble strips" along the center section and shoulders of Contra Costa's 11-mile portion of road.

A double-fine zone created along the stretch of Highway 4 between Brentwood and Discovery Bay had a dramatic impact on reducing accidents, Oakes noted.

During the period between 2000 and 2002, there were seven fatal accidents on that portion of Highway 4, Oakes said. During 2003, the year the double-fine bill took effect, there were none. However, Highway 4's double-fine designation has expired, along with a dozen other such zones in the state. Oakes said Torlakson's office has not received a request to reinstate the double-fine zone on Highway 4, but the Legislature may yet decide to address the expired zones.

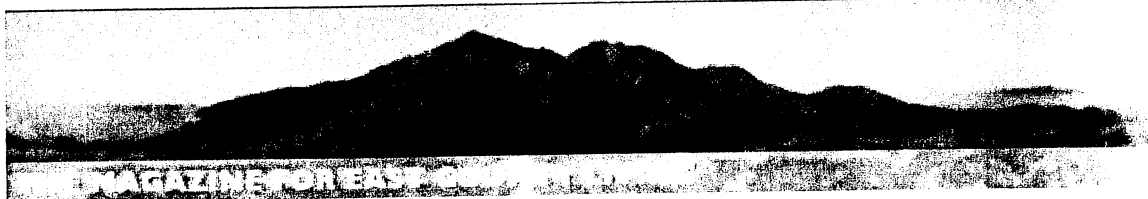
"The bottom line is that Highway 4 is safer now," Oakes said. "The message got out. We hope to achieve the same thing on Vasco."

Tamara Grippi covers Contra Costa County. She can be reached at (925) 416-4882 or at tgrippi@angnewspapers.com

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DYING TO GET HOME

Vasco Road Outrage Revisited

by Joanne Flynn
 Photos by Brad Shifflett

Jeff Altman and I are doing as well as can be expected seven months after Tricia, who was Jeff's wife and my best friend, was killed in a senseless accident on Vasco Road. The oldest of Jeff's sons is helping take care of his four brothers while Jeff works fulltime to keep food on the table.

The Altman house is pretty quiet without Tricia's happy laughter, but it hasn't even been a year yet, so that's to be expected.

I miss her every day. We were so close. There are still times when I cry or get mad because I can't pick up the phone and call her. Vasco Road did that to us — did it to me and to Jeff. We've got to make it stop.

People think that Vasco Road isn't safe. However, the worst part of the road is the twisting narrow section towards Livermore, and there hasn't been a fatality on that unimproved part of Vasco Road in seven years. So it isn't actually the road itself that causes the problems.

The only complaint we have — and it is a big complaint — is that the road doesn't prevent problems. In other words, the road doesn't do anything to stop drivers from crossing the double-yellow line and driving 80 or 100 miles an hour in an attempt to pass a line of cars going at the speed limit, or, more commonly, passing a line of cars that are, themselves, going 20 miles an hour over the speed limit.

For the past seven months Jeff and I have been working with CRAVE (Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences) and with the County Advisory Task Force, which is formed of representatives from the community and from the California Highway Patrol.

Improving the safety of Vasco Road has not proven to be a simple task. During this time we have gained some insight into how big a challenge we're actually confronted with in fixing this problem. The task requires intelligence, perseverance, and a sense of humor (to keep you from going mad).



JUNE 2004

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One of too many fatal accidents on Vasco Road

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A Team Effort

We've been pleased and surprised by the amount of support we've received from elected officials on both the municipal and state levels, as well as from the Highway Patrol. They all agree that something needs to be done. Members of the team have been working together effectively. When we have questions we can call somebody and get answers. If there are meetings that Jeff and I should attend, we get a call. We've been kept informed about proposed legislation.



The California Highway Patrol, in particular, has been doing a fantastic job and we've accomplished some good things in the past seven months:

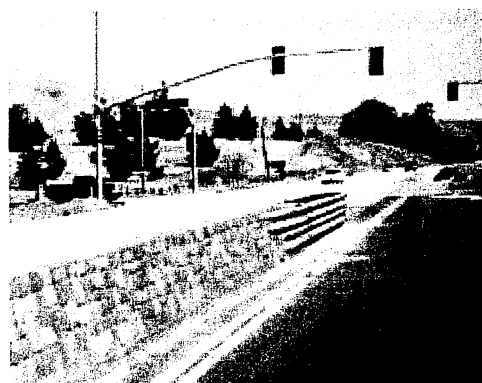
- Designation of the Daylight Headlight Zone
- Designation of the double fine zone
- Designation of the road as a Safety Corridor
- Improved signage
- Installation of radar feedback signs

Jeff and I are members of the Public Service Subcommittee for the task force, which includes David Piepho, Cliff Kroeger (CHP), Annette Beckstrand (Brentwood Vice Mayor), and Brenda De La Ossa (Supervisor Greenburg's Community Liaison), plus two seniors from Liberty High School, Danica Northend and Eric Bridges.

The two seniors on the sub-committee are developing PSAs (Public Service Announcements), which will consist of 60-second TV spots. The two students are directing and producing these. We are delighted by their professionalism and the quality of the work they are doing.

County Level Let-down

The County is the only part of the team that has not been doing their job well, in our opinion. The County conducted the Camino Diablo intersection improvement and many of the people we have heard from think that they spent their millions in making a bad situation even worse.



Sample of another alternative

The County has been monitoring the intersection and they report that things are going fine. What's the problem with this picture?

I'm irritated by the fact that none of the people making the decisions and doing the research ever travel the road. The people that drive the road know the road; they can see what the problems are. Charts, graphs, and tables don't tell the entire story.

The good news is that the City of Brentwood allocated 1.5 million dollars to the County for immediate safety improvements to Vasco Road. The bad news is that the County has been waffling, in our opinion. In particular, we are not satisfied with the results of a study that Nolte Associates, Inc. conducted and, in our opinion, completely mismanaged.

Someone told me once that the County has a reputation for conducting studies as an alternative to actually taking actions on important issues. I can see how they get that reputation.

In the current situation the County report provides an excuse for inaction by basing all their computations on CalTrans' lofty standards, even though Vasco Road is not a State road. The report made Brentwood's 1.5 million dollar offer of help seem paltry when compared with an estimated 94 million dollar outlay the report said was required to put barriers between the traffic lanes.

From the beginning we've been advocating these traffic barriers to go between the lanes of traffic and keep them separate. This is the only practical way of preventing speeding or inattentive drivers from turning or drifting into oncoming traffic. Instead of helping us figure out a practical way of doing this, the Nolte study seemed to be created for the purpose of discouraging us from making this change.

For example, the study provided a "long list" of 22 possible safety improvements, and relegated safety barriers to the final two points — numbers 21 and 22.

The Nolte report, for example, said that installing a divider to the CalTrans standard requires five feet of clearance on both sides between the barrier and the lanes of traffic (which they called "traveled ways"). The effect of this standard is to require a minimum 52 feet of roadway section, as opposed to our existing 40 feet of roadway.

Basing the report on CalTrans standards effectively means that the median barriers will never be installed. As a sop, the report recommended spending \$786,000 for Passing Lane Ahead signs, and Do Not Pass signs, as well as fully detailed rumble strips on the center and the sides.

Pushing the Barrier

The Council is being asked to allocate the funds from Brentwood to pay for the proposed rumble strips. We're not opposed to rumble strips, but believe that the rumble strips must be included as part of a more comprehensive effort. They will help drivers who are tired or inattentive, but will not stop illegal passing. Also, rumble strips would not have stopped the trailer that broke away from its hitch, crossed the centerline, and killed my friend, Tricia.

We make the argument that Highway 17, which is the highway going over the mountains into Santa Cruz, has concrete barriers that were not constructed to CalTrans standards.

The County maintains that they could do that with a four-lane highway more easily than we can with our two-lane road, because the extra two lanes make it more feasible for emergency vehicles to pass. The current break-down lanes on Vasco have only four-inches of surface material with no reinforced base and would be unable to maintain the weight of the emergency vehicles.

However, we contend that if there is an emergency on 580, for example, traffic can and does move over or pass on the breakdown lanes and the emergency vehicles can use the roadway. We could do that with our one lane — move the traffic over to the breakdown lane, or even onto the shoulder, and let the emergency vehicles pass on the traffic lanes.

Fire companies in other places are accustomed to making traffic breaks in the opposite lane and using that as a means of getting to an accident scene. Traffic breaks are, of course, inconvenient. However, the presence of the barrier that necessitates the break, in that case, greatly increases the chances of a crash victim still being alive when the rescue workers finally get to the scene.

Putting a cross-over break in the barrier ever two miles would minimize the amount of road that had to be shut down, and, as a result, the duration of the closure.

Also, the unwillingness of the County study to consider anything but the expensive CalTrans standards prevented them from looking at alternative barriers. Some of these less-expensive options include such things as sand-filled and water-filled barriers, which might be purchased for a fraction of the cost of the standard concrete ones.

We even learned of a prototype barrier that was much narrower — which the experts call "vertical delineators" — but still would resist being sheered off. In particular, I don't understand why the study couldn't have considered a simple metal rail. Those things must be cheap and effective. But the County study wouldn't consider such alternatives because they aren't CalTrans standards. There might even be Federally approved standard barriers available at less cost, but nobody is checking into that.

Let's Make it Happen

We're frustrated that the County is in the position of leading this effort without providing effective leadership. The Nolte people seemingly can't see outside the box. We need creative, workable solutions. We need people to be figure out what we actually can do and how we can do it.

The amount required to put the most expensive barriers down the entire length of the road is impossible, so let's find a way at least to put inexpensive barriers in the hot-spots. Let's stop the cross-overs to the extent we can.

Let's make this a road that is safe as possible as soon as possible so that people can go to work, come home, go to their family, have dinner. Let's cut out the awful news stories that talk about someone being involved in a head-on accident and is dead or seriously injured.

Nolte's study contained a graphic showing the potential effects of a barrier on Vasco Road over the past seven years. According to the graph installing concrete barriers on all three segments would have played a role in six out of the seven fatal accidents during that period of time.

One of the fatal accidents the barriers would surely have prevented was the one that resulted in Tricia's death. If only we could go back in time and do last year what Jeff and I are hoping can be done next year, dear Traci would still be with us.

This is what we need to do. Now is the time we need to do it.

You Can Get Involved

A lot of us are upset by the Vasco Road problem. There are some specific things that all of you reading this article can do.

- When you see foolhardy driving on Vasco Road you can report this directly to the CHP. I have the number programmed into my phone book. 707-551-4100.
- Contact the County with suggestions and complaints.
- Link to our website — www.vascoroad.com.
- Contact me (925-519-0930).

I don't care if a thousand of you contact me. I don't know what the County does with complaints. I know that I'll do something. I'll tabulate, report, and respond in every way possible.

The best thing you can do is to drive the speed limit yourself. Drive defensively! Don't imagine that what happened to Patricia Altman, on August 10, won't happen to you.

The Reality

Ten people have been killed on Vasco Road in less than three years:

2000-01

November 2000: Driver killed after corssing into oncoming traffic causing a three car crash.

June 2001: Man died after crossing into oncoming traffic at a high rate of speed.

2002

January: Motorcyclist killed when a pickup van ran into him in the fog.

October: Driver killed when he collided with a big rig while trying to pass another vehicle.

2003

May: Three people killed when a Honda Accord crossed the double yellow lines, killing the driver and passenger of the Honda, driver of one of three oncoming cars in the opposite lane involved in the accident.

August: Driver killed by a runaway trailer.

Total: 46 collisions; 12 injury collisions — 18 injured people total; 2 with fatalities, resulting in 4 deaths.

2004 For Contra Costa only, January through March

Total: 9 collisions; 4 with injuries — 5 injured people total; no deaths.

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Article Last Updated: Thursday, June 10, 2004 - 3:32:45 AM PST

CHP's 'speed team' preys on Vasco Road speeders

Law enforcement hopes to curb violators on dangerous route

By Tamara Grippi, STAFF WRITER

The California Highway Patrol is calling on reinforcements from all over the Bay Area to provide heavy-duty patrol on Vasco Road today.

The CHP's "speed-enforcement team," which consists of officers working throughout the nine Bay Area counties, will crack down on speeders and other unsafe drivers along Vasco.

Officials and locals have been particularly concerned about the safety on Vasco, a major route linking eastern Contra Costa County with southern Alameda County.

In 2003, seven people were killed in automobile accidents along the corridor.

The speed team, which already has targeted Vasco at least once, returns today to remind drivers to play it safe.

"Speed is the main focus," CHP officer Cliff Kroeger said. "Most of the collisions on Vasco are the result of speed. We're trying to reduce speed as a result."

Typically, one CHP officer patrols Contra Costa County's 11-mile portion of the road on a daily basis. In addition, the CHP has been able to assign a second officer periodically.

The CHP's Dublin office provides an officer to patrol the Alameda County portion of the road.

Meanwhile, Contra Costa County is moving forward with plans to install bumpy, grooved, "rumble strips" along the center section and the shoulders of Contra Costa's portion of the road.

The strips are designed to alert wayward drivers who may be drifting out of their lanes.

Most recently, the county has heard from bicycle enthusiasts concerned that the shoulder rumble strips would make it difficult for those braving the road on two wheels.

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Robert Raburn, executive director of the East Bay Bicycle Coalition, said the shoulder rumble strips can leave bicyclists with little options when they need to maneuver around an obstruction.

"It really relegates the bicyclists to the worst portion of the road -- the farthest right edge," he said.

Raburn said bicyclists who have limited options for pedaling in the area have participated in various recreational bike rides on Vasco Road.

County Public Works Director Julie Bueren explained Vasco's shoulders, which vary between 6 and 8 feet in width, will be able to accommodate the rumble strip while leaving 5 feet of pavement for bicyclists.

In addition, Bueren said, the county plans to leave breaks in the rumble strips where storm drain grates are located.

Bruce Ohlson, of the Delta Pedalars Bicycle Club, said his group voiced early opposition to the shoulder rumble strip in order to get the attention of the engineer designing the safety feature.

"We found middle ground," he said. "As it is now, it's something both we cyclists and motorists can live with."

Vasco Road will remain a legally designated bike route, Bueren said. The county hopes to begin the rumble strip project, along with a routine resurfacing of the road, in July or August.

Tamara Grippi can be reached at (925) 416-4882 or at tgrippi@angnewspapers.com

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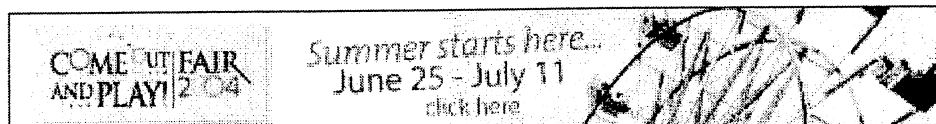


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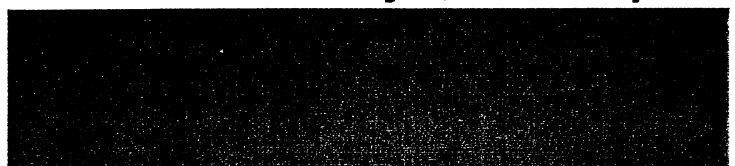
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Introduction: Originally built as a rural two-lane road and reconstructed when it was relocated in 1996, Vasco Road, in Northern California's fast-growing eastern Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, has begun a transformation into something much busier—and that change has serious implications for the safety of the people who travel on it. Currently the road carries some 22,000 vehicles a day on its more congested stretches, an increase of nearly 40% over the past eight years. Three major crashes resulting in seven fatalities occurred there in the summer of 2003, prompting a group of private citizens and local officials to explore short-term solutions for making the road safer.

Vasco Road is illustrative of many of the unique aspects of rural roads in



Rural Traffic Demands New Ways to Improve Safety

transition, a category of road that is among the fastest-growing in the nation, as suburban developments continue to encroach on rural areas:

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- *The region that Vasco Road serves includes land that belongs in the "urban boundary rural" category defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA);*
- *Its original design means that substantive improvements are difficult and costly;*
- *Gains from improvements are rapidly eroded by growth in traffic;*
- *Short-term measures use a combination of re-engineering the roadway and stepped-up enforcement;*
- *Because county funding is not sufficient, officials have turned to the legislature to gain eligibility for limited state financing;*
- *Ultimately, local officials hope to convert it to a four-lane highway for acceptance by the state.*

The history of Vasco Road is emblematic of how the present practice of waiting until safety has deteriorated to a certain level before implementing changes is failing to meet the needs of the rural road in transition.

Built as a two-lane county road during World War II, Vasco Road, which runs from Livermore in Alameda County north to Brentwood in Contra

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Costa County, was relocated in the mid-1990s to accommodate the construction of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir. When the new Vasco Road opened in 1996, it carried 16,000 vehicles per day; it now carries more than 22,000.

The high volume has taken its toll: In the summer of 2003, three crashes resulting in seven fatalities occurred there. In addition, there has been a concentration of rear-end collisions in certain sections of the roadway, an indicator of congestion problems. "A lot of people have moved to the eastern county [from the San Francisco Bay Area] to seek affordable housing," said Federal Glover, a Contra Costa County supervisor. "The population of Contra Costa County rose 18 percent from 1990 to 2000, and 48 percent of that came from the east county area—Brentwood, Antioch."

The road carried 16,000 vehicles per day when it re-opened in 1996; it now carries more than 22,000.



Indeed, not only is Contra Costa County the fastest-growing county in California, Brentwood is the second-fastest-growing city in the state.

Steve Bell, a captain with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) offices in Alameda County, said that many of the roads in eastern Contra Costa and Alameda counties such as Vasco Road have outgrown their original functions. "Roads that were designed as county roads are now being used as major thoroughfares," Bell

said.

To find a way to relieve the strain put on Vasco Road by eastern Contra Costa County's growth, evidenced by the rear-end collisions and last summer's crashes, the county hired a private firm, Nolte Associates Inc., to assess the roadway. The county was considering installing a concrete barrier down the center to prevent vehicles from crossing the double-yellow center lines. The firm found that a barrier would be impractical, because it would require major modifications to the roadway.

In a presentation made in March 2004 to the Vasco Road Safety Task Force, a group of private citizens and government officials organized after the 2003 crashes, Nolte Associates showed that the entire road would have to be widened to meet design standards for sight distance and emergency access before a concrete barrier could be installed. After consulting police, fire and public works officials, the firm determined that a workable short-term option would be to install "rumble strips," a combination of grooves and raised bumps, along the road's center to discourage drivers from passing other vehicles illegally. They recommended adding grooves on the road's shoulder, as well.

The consultants also looked at improvements to increase capacity around the intersection of Vasco and Camino Diablo Roads. It has had a high concentration of rear-end collisions,



due in part, according to the Nolte Associates report, to backed-

up conditions at the intersection's traffic signal. An extra lane had been added in each direction to increase the capacity of the intersection and reduce congestion. This has helped to reduce the risk of rear-end collisions. The consultants recommended more improvements to the intersection, including lengthening those recently installed lanes and adding exclusive right-turn lanes.

Julie Bueren, Deputy Public Works Director for Contra Costa County and project engineer for the rumble strip improvements to Vasco Road, said that there was "a lot of public interest" in the barriers. However, given the county's current budget—a \$1.5 million loan from the City of Brentwood, a sum inadequate to cover the cost of a median barrier—rumble strips seemed like the best option.

"We started with a review of the collision data from 1996 when the road opened and looked at a myriad of options, everything from simple signing to a state-standard highway," Bueren said, adding that the road had not experienced a higher rate of crashes than the statewide average for similar roadways, but that last summer's fatalities occurring in close succession drew the public's attention to the need for safety improvements.

"To put in a median barrier would involve widening the road or compromising shoulder width," Bueren said. "Then, in consultation with Caltrans [the California Department of Transportation], we found that soft barriers [such as rumble strips] have been effective in some of the state facilities where Caltrans is using them, and it's something we could do at a reasonable cost while working toward a [long-term] solution."

In the meantime, Bueren said that the strips won't prevent those who are determined to pass vehicles illegally, but it will give them pause.

"There was a lot of anecdotal evidence, stories of people passing. They get frustrated and pass when they're not supposed to. I think [the strips] will help deter that—if drivers are talking on their cell phones, not paying attention, or start to veer off the road. We have had a number of off-road incidences. It will help those people pay attention."

Bell agreed that the strips will help mitigate one of the road's biggest traffic safety problems. "Our biggest concern had to do with speeding ... speeding, and crossing over double lines, which is even more reckless," Bell said. "The rumble strips will help, I believe. For the most part, engineering [improvements] are a good component of managing traffic."

Other short-term steps should help with the speeding problem, Bell said. The CHP began aerial enforcement of speed limits on Vasco Road, and active feedback signs have been installed to tell drivers how fast they are going. In addition, drivers are now required to use their headlights during the day on Vasco Road.

"What we are seeing is fewer and fewer people crossing those double lines," Bell said. "There's an appreciable difference now. That doesn't mean every car is now complying with speed. I don't know if we'll ever reach that, but that is a goal."

Long-term, Bueren said, the county will be working to achieve the widening of Vasco Road and other actions that would bring it up to a sufficient standard for acceptance into the state highway system. A crucial step is to build consensus with Alameda County, the cities of Brentwood and Livermore, and Caltrans on an improvement strategy for the corridor, she said.

Last year, legislation was passed that re-classifies portions of the road as "inter-regional" and "inter-county," which makes it eligible

to compete for some state funding. This was an important beginning, Bueren said, to achieving a highway-standard design and acceptance by the state.

But evidenced by what has happened to neighboring Highway 4, obtaining "highway" status is no guarantee that there will be sufficient funding for all the necessary safety improvements. Highway 4, which ties into I-80 in Hercules on the west and extends south and east past Stockton, passing Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley and Brentwood along the way, has also experienced major growth pains in recent years. Although its congestion problems and collision rates have generated less attention than those of Vasco Road, residents of the eastern Contra Costa County cities and towns that it serves have expressed concern that the road doesn't have the capacity to handle the traffic generated by new developments proposed for the area. In fact, according to Susan Miller, Engineering Manager for the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, backups on portions of Highway 4 that stretch from Oakley and Brentwood to I-5 have prompted many eastern Contra Costa County residents to travel Vasco Road instead, exacerbating Vasco Road's congestion problems.

"You have a roadway that in some areas has not been improved in 50 years," Miller said. "One of our priorities was to widen Highway 4 to serve the growing population. There is a huge amount of growth, and people are frustrated. [But] projects are expensive and it takes a long time to get environmental clearance."

Most of the towns along Highway 4 were still relatively rural when the road was built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but the towns along the northwesterly stretch of Highway 4 turned suburban fairly quickly, and today even towns in eastern Contra Costa County have become bedroom communities for people

working in San Francisco and the East Bay. A widening project which expanded sections of the road from two to four lanes began on the road in 1988, but because it encompassed multiple projects, each requiring its own environmental review process, construction proceeded slowly, one section at a time.


Thus, in addition to experiencing many transformations throughout the years, Highway 4 currently comprises several very distinct segments. These segments range from the four-lane freeway portions that stretch from Hercules to Martinez, newer, widened 8-lane sections from Concord to Pittsburg, the narrower freeway portions in Antioch—a segment that has experienced heavy congestion in recent years—and the still narrower portions that extend from just past Antioch south to Stockton, an area that until the last decade or so had remained very rural. Despite the widening projects underway on several sections of the road, residents of fast-growing towns served by the highway, particularly Antioch, have expressed concern that officials are not doing enough to make the highway safer and less frustrating for commuters.

As Contra Costa County grows, officials are looking to public transit to help alleviate some of the strain on Highway 4. A Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) line now extends to the Pittsburg/Bay Point area, and plans to build an eBART line (a less costly "light-rail" version of BART) to serve Antioch and extend past Oakley and Brentwood to Byron are in the works, according to Miller. The project will be funded with money that comes in from the Bay Area-wide hike in bridge tolls that took effect this year, officials hope.

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[Nolte Associates' Vasco Road Safety Study presentation \(ppt.\)](#)

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Counties should unite on Vasco Road safety

Annette Beckstrand

Published 06/18/2006 - 2:02 p.m.

Editor:

As many of you, I too became physically ill when I learned of the accident this week on Vasco Road. I felt sick as my friend called Monday morning shortly after the accident, and described to me the accident she witnessed in her rearview mirror as she accelerated out of the way of the vehicle that lost control, and was headed for her car. It is my understanding that four men in the northbound vehicle that crossed over into the southbound lane were all killed in the accident. It is my understanding that a number of the persons in the southbound vehicles that were struck by the oncoming vehicle were seriously injured and airlifted to a hospital.

As I listened to my friend's telling of the scene she so narrowly escaped, yet witnessed in her rearview mirror, my stomach turned and my heart sank as I considered this tragic loss of human life. My thoughts then went to the families of all those involved and how their lives have been altered forever. My next thoughts were of those of my own family members that do, and have in the past traveled that road daily. For the past 11-plus years, my husband has traveled Vasco Road numerous times each day. My two adult sons have done so daily in past years for work, and my adult daughter did so for a time for her work. After contacting the authorities to notify them of an eyewitness report, I tried to reach my husband to hear his voice, and know that he was not involved in the accident.

Since that time, I have been in contact with Contra Costa County Supervisor Mary Piepho. She arrived at the scene, and we exchanged our concerns over the efforts we have exerted in the past few years for improvements on Vasco Road. The City of Brentwood has no jurisdiction over Vasco Road, as it is in unincorporated areas of Contra Costa and Alameda counties. The city has, however, continued to meet with the City of Livermore to discuss our concerns over the need to make safety improvements on Vasco Road. Unfortunately, Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty does not recognize the reverse-commute on Vasco Road, and continues to declare it solely the problem of Contra Costa County. He appears unwilling to acknowledge that eight of the nine persons who have lost their lives on that road in the past two years were Alameda County residents traveling to jobs in East Contra Costa County - and that does make it his problem. Regional travel routes require regional solutions. Supervisor Piepho and the City of Brentwood continue to try to work with the County Board of Supervisors as well as the elected representatives and staff from Alameda County, and the CHP, to bring all our resources to the table to try to move forward on safety improvements to Vasco Road.

More homes or not, we need a road that will provide for safe travel for our current needs. While the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), chaired by Supervisor Haggerty, and the Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC) continue to require the building of a minimum number of homes in Brentwood in order for us to receive our "return-to-source" funds, they continue to work against us when it comes to acknowledging the need for safety improvements and funding for Vasco Road. It seems there are no simple answers, and little support for human lives, compared to the enormous opposition of the environmental community when it comes to support for safety improvements and funding.

The cities of Brentwood, Oakley, Antioch and Pittsburg, as well as Contra Costa County, currently charge a fee of \$15,000 to developers, for each home they build. That money goes into a fund to improve regional transportation routes. Much has been done in the past few years to facilitate transportation in the region. The widening you see on Highway 4 to Concord, and the continued work on the Highway 4 Bypass are funded almost entirely from this developer fee. The state continues to ignore the needs of East County, so we are trying to manage our own needs on a more local level. I realize this is a lot of information, and may not make a lot of sense to the tragedy and emotions at hand.

I suppose it is my attempt to help you understand that I am not oblivious to the issues that face our commuters. I am not without feeling for the lives that have been lost, and altered forever. Many of us are doing everything we are able to try to get the multi-regional, state and federal support that is necessary to balance our homes and roads. There is still much work to be done.

There is still much to be done. Tragically and ironically, last week a meeting was scheduled to take place later this week regarding the next steps and possible funding for the drastically needed improvements to Vasco Road, Highway 239, and I580. That meeting includes Congressman Pombo, Assemblyman Guy Houston, City of Brentwood, and the Acting Secretary of Transportation Cino, as well as many other civic leaders. I sincerely hope that we can finally convince all the necessary powers that this is a regional issue

that will take a regional solution. The City of Brentwood is committed to that. We appreciate the support of our residents in this continuing battle.

If you have an Alameda County (or Santa Clara County) employer, please ask them to contact Supervisor Haggerty and ask for his support. You fill your gas tanks, shop, and pay employment taxes in his county – what is he willing to do to keep employees, and the taxes he gains from them, in Alameda County? Supervisor Haggerty can be contacted by phone at (510) 272-6691; by fax at (510) 208-3910; and by e-mail at district1@acgov.org.

Thank you for contacting us with your concerns. Although it doesn't solve matters today, I hope you can take some comfort in knowing we are not blind to this tragedy, and we are committed to seeking solutions, even if it is only one step at a time.

Annette Beckstrand
City Councilmember



San Francisco Chronicle

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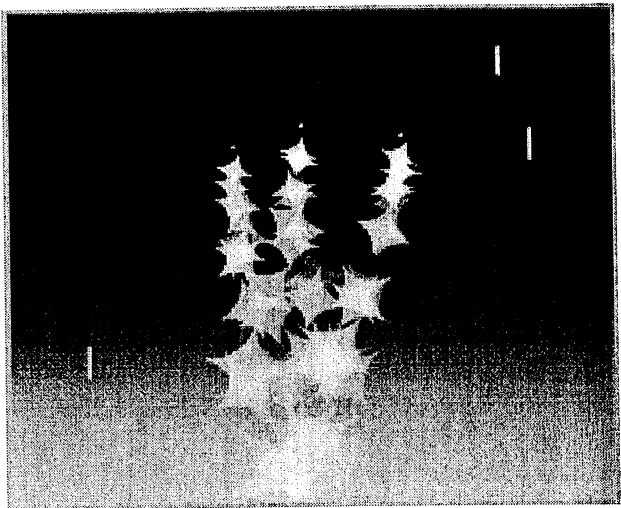
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San Francisco Chronicle

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Addition of rumble strips authorized to slow traffic on deadly Vasco Road

Erin Hallissy, Chronicle Staff Writer
Friday, August 20, 2004



Work will begin soon on a median rumble strip -- which makes a lot of noise and causes cars to rattle -- to discourage passing on heavily traveled Vasco Road between Brentwood and Livermore, where seven people were killed in collisions in 2003.

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After the deadly wrecks, Contra Costa County, the California Highway Patrol and motorists formed a task force to find short- and long-term solutions to speeding and reckless driving. On Thursday, County Supervisor Millie Greenberg announced the addition of a raised rumble strip to the center divide along with rumble strips on the shoulders.

"It is a first step in what we hope will be a series of improvements to that road," Greenberg said. "This has been used by Caltrans on other roads and has significantly reduced and in some cases has eliminated crossovers."

CHP Officer Cliff Kroeger, who served on the



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task force, said similar rumble strips on Highway 37 west of Vallejo have improved safety on that road.

But some bicyclists, including the Delta Pedalers Bicycle Club, have raised objections to shoulder rumble strips, saying they would be unsafe for riders and would squeeze them closer to the road's edge, where debris collects.

Meanwhile, crackdowns on speeding and public education campaigns to slow traffic down have already reduced the number of accidents on Vasco Road, particularly fatal crashes, Kroeger said. So far this year, no one has been killed on the road, which is a major commute route between eastern Contra Costa and Livermore.

"I believe the drivers are more cognizant of the roadway," Kroeger said.

Drivers are now asked to use headlights during the day on Vasco Road, and state Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, is pushing legislation to designate Vasco Road as a safety corridor and a double-fine zone. The CHP has applied for a grant to increase enforcement on the road, and Kroeger said the patrol is still waiting to hear whether money is available from the state.

Several students at Liberty High School in Brentwood also are finishing public service announcements that show the graphic results of speeding on the road. The spots, which are 30 seconds and 60 seconds long, will be available to any television station.

E-mail Erin Hallissy at ehallissy@sfgate.com.

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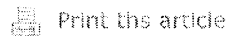
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Vasco Road gets short shrift on funding

Madan Sheina

Published 09/01/2006 - 2:43 p.m.

A shortfall in funding for East County's transportation projects could mean a nine-year delay in overdue safety improvements on the notoriously dangerous Vasco Road, a prospect that has local officials fuming, particularly in the wake of recent fatalities.

Under Transplan's current draft proposals, even preliminary studies to address the increasingly hazardous road would not commence until mid-2008 – a delay called "shameful" by David Piepho, a member of Discovery Bay's town council.

"To not even talk about doing an environmental study, let alone start work on any road improvements, for two years is unacceptable, especially when people are dying on Vasco today," said Piepho.

Walter MacVittie, chairman of the East County Regional Planning Commission, echoed Piepho's concerns and expressed dismay at the lack of immediate funds being allocated from sources like Measure J, and ECCCRFFA (East Contra Costa County Regional Fee and Financing Authority) to improve safety on Vasco.

"I'm disappointed to see a lack of substantial funding on that (Vasco) corridor, especially in light of this month's fatalities," he told Transplan members who convened at a special meeting in Antioch last week to discuss available funding for major East County transportation projects through 2015.

The figures don't make for pretty reading. The stark economic reality is that planners are staring at a \$500 million revenue shortfall for current and planned roadway projects. One of the projects that might be put on the back burner is Vasco safety enhancement.

According to Transplan's draft proposal, Vasco has taken a back seat to higher-profile regional projects like the widening of Highway 4 through Antioch, the Highway 4 Bypass and eBART. Those three projects are set to grab the lion's share of funds from Measure J (a half-cent transportation sales tax) and ECCCRFFA (that collects money from local developers on new houses) that are being earmarked until 2015.

Contra Costa County is only budgeting \$321,000 for 2008 and \$333,000 in 2009 for Vasco improvements. Meanwhile, Alameda County has allocated \$3 million, but not until 2010. However, all of that money is being earmarked exclusively for preliminary planning and studies, and it falls miles short of the \$200 million estimated to be necessary to fix Vasco.

And that's in stark contrast to the \$63 million being earmarked by Transplan for Highway 4 widening alone in 2008 and 2009, according to its current draft proposal.

The long-term prospects are not much brighter for Vasco. Up to the year 2015 the Highway 4 widening is slated to get \$205 million and the Bypass will receive \$162 million. But for the same period only \$654,000 is being set aside for Vasco improvements.

MacVittie isn't surprised by that miserly allocation and said that Transplan has over the past six or seven years been pre-occupied with road projects for what he calls the "west side of East County," specifically on Highway 4 projects.

"I'd like to see some of the emphasis shifted to the far East County roads. That's only reasonable, as Vasco has become more of a regional East County (artery) and many Pittsburg, Antioch communities also use it for commuting to and from work. I understand that Highway 4 is a priority, but Vasco has been a big problem for a very long time now."

Antioch Mayor Don Freitas conceded that Measure J and ECCCRFFA funds would not be able to cover Vasco improvements in the near term at least. "A lot of those funds are going to developing Highway 4," he said. "We're not sure whether they can cover Vasco, even though we'd like to see a bit going to it."

The lack of funds means that any meaningful construction work for fixing Vasco could feasibly be pushed back until after 2015, which is much too late for Piepho and MacVittie.

"Vasco is becoming more and more dangerous for commuters and we have to address it sooner rather than later. I don't think we should be pushing off any project to future years. Rather we should be

earmarking more resources to it," MacVittie said.

"Even the money we're earmarking for preliminary studies in the plan have been pushed back two years. Alameda has earmarked \$3 million for 2008 and now that's even been pushed back to 2010."

Piepho also pointed out that since the improvements directed at Highway 4 and the Highway 4 Bypass project are aimed at increasing traffic volumes and flows, it might compound the problems on Vasco.

"The push to finish the Bypass project will simply dump more traffic on Vasco since it connects directly to the south side of that road," Piepho warned.

Transportation planners point out, however, that Vasco needs to clear a full environmental study before any substantial funds can be directed at the project. But that's something that Piepho thinks is unnecessary bureaucracy and a waste of money.

"The funding earmarked by Contra Costa for 2008 and 2009 is being earmarked only for the preparation of environmental documents," he said. "But didn't we already draw that up when the road was originally built and shouldn't that study still be valid? We're making our own bureaucracy."

Julie Bueren, Contra Costa County Public Works Deputy Director, said her team is tentatively putting together a schedule and aims to have a hearing next month. "We're hoping to fast-track that environmental process so that we can get money for the project quicker," she said.

When the new Vasco Road was built over a decade ago to connect the Brentwood area to Interstate 580, it looked like a pleasant scenic drive for East County people getting to and from Pleasanton/Livermore. But following rapid residential growth in East County, the winding, undivided two-lane road has evolved into a heavily used commuter corridor.

An estimated 19,000 to 24,000 vehicles now use the road daily, up from the reported 16,000 to 18,000 in 1997. At peak hours between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m., Vasco has nearly bumper-to-bumper traffic often flowing at between 55 and 65 mph.

The heavy traffic volumes coupled with speeding drivers passing a couple of feet from one another is a potentially lethal cocktail. Since 2000, 16 fatalities have taken place on Vasco in Contra Costa County (statistics are not available for Alameda County), making it one of the most dangerous roads in the state. Last month, four people died on Vasco Road in a collision involving three vehicles.

Most of the recent work done to improve road safety on Vasco has focused on implementing bright yellow lane delineators, rumble strips and highly visible warning (radar) signs posted along the road and introducing doubled traffic fines for speeders along some hazardous sections.

Both Piepho and MacVittie agree these are simply quick fixes that address the symptoms, but not the root cause of the problem.

"Up to now we've been working with state grants to help change driver behavior, not fix the road. But you can fix driver behavior only so much," Piepho said.

He referred to what he called the "Three E Principle" – engineering, education and enforcement.

"The fact of the matter is that Vasco was never engineered correctly," said Piepho. "Education has been to slow down drivers. And CHP has been out there writing a lot of tickets. But that hasn't stopped people from drifting out of their lanes.

"We have to go back to the basics and look again at engineering. It's not the drivers that is the real problem – it's the road."

Piepho would like at a minimum to see the erection of a central concrete barrier between the two opposite lanes. But MacVittie won't be satisfied with anything less than a divided four-lane roadway or, better still, six lanes.

Clearly there is no easy solution to re-engineering Vasco. The million-dollar question is how much it will take to make it safe. No one seems to know exactly for sure.

But planners do know it will cost a lot of money – around \$100 million for the median barrier alone, and more than double that to provide two lanes in each direction. Some estimate a six-lane road would cost as

much as \$300 million to \$400 million to construct.

"The long-term goal should be to have four divided lanes. I'd hate to see money being spent on building just a central divider when it's clearly a short-term and expensive solution," MacVittie said.

Also the road infrastructure in far East County is generally underdeveloped and therefore is more expensive to develop. For example, the way that Vasco snakes through the hills in narrow curves makes it tricky, and therefore more costly, to widen or realign.

With funds at a premium, Freitas said that Vasco improvements should be a collective of the three counties impacted by Vasco's heavy cross-commute traffic: Contra Costa, Alameda and San Joaquin. But the miserly funds allocated by Contra Costa and Alameda are clearly inadequate.

"The biggest challenge is getting support from Alameda," Freitas said.

Alameda County has done some work to straighten out sections of the road on its side of the county line – although this work was done by the Alameda County Water District and PG&E, who are moving their facilities in anticipation of new road alignment.

Nevertheless, the general feeling among Transplan members is that Alameda County isn't pulling its weight. MacVittie said that in the past, some of Alameda's local politicians had palmed off Vasco as a problem for Contra Costa constituents, not theirs.

"But it's their problem as well. A lot of Contra Costa residents work in Alameda. They are bringing healthy tax revenue into that county, which helps local residents," MacVittie said. "And if Vasco shuts down due to accident, then people working in Alameda will be late, which does make it their problem to some extent."

MacVittie said that Contra Costa County officials are also working with San Joaquin County.

"They need to be brought into the mix," said MacVittie. "The rapidly developing Mountain House community (in San Joaquin County) is starting to impact local roads. New commuter traffic coming from J4 is starting to hit Vasco."

Planners acknowledge Vasco as a tri-county issue and advocate closer cooperation between various agencies.

"This has to be a collective effort from Contra Costa, Alameda and San Joaquin. Sure, finding funding is a challenge. But if we are communicating, we can build those bridges quicker," Bueren said.

But Piepho went further, saying it's the duty of regional leaders to eke out funds wherever they might come from.

"The community is asking us as regional leaders to do our job and turn over every rock for funds and bring them all together. And you guys are a big rock," he said, directing his comments directly at the Transplan committee.

Piepho, however, bemoaned the lack of a coherent or coordinated strategy going forward.

"Today we don't have a plan in place for doing that," he said. "We don't have a clue how much money is available to fix Vasco or where it will all come from. All I see is bits and pieces.

"We need a central lead agency, a team captain, preferably from Contra Costa, to proactively go out to Transplan, ECCCRFFA and other state agencies to identify small pots of money, however small or large they are."

According to MacVittie, the game plan is to push Vasco to the top of Transplan's agenda and put it on an equal footing for funding with other regional roadway projects.

"We need to set it as a priority, to get it as a top line item discussion and make sure it's not pushed behind Highway 4," he said.

MacVittie points out that the prioritization of funding ultimately rests with Transplan committee votes.

"If East County residents knew that the plan was to do nothing until at least 2015 they would storm offices and kick everyone out," Piepho said.

If so, and with elections just around the corner in November, Vasco could well be an issue that piques the attention of local politicians.

Freitas suggested that one of the reasons why Vasco has been unable to attract county funding readily is because the problem "was always framed as a growth issue. It's not. It's an economic development issue as well. People need Vasco to get to the Livermore Lab and get to Silicon Valley to work on time."

Freitas hopes the dialogue around Vasco road improvements will change from residential development to economic development issue.

"But above all, it's a safety issue," Freitas reminded everyone at the meeting.

The topic of residential and economic growth remains a highly contentious issue in East County today, and local officials are trying to balance new housing development with adequate supporting road infrastructure.

"Certain environmental groups have threatened to sue over Vasco widening, saying it promotes growth. But that growth is already there," said Piepho.

The problem seems to stem from the language of Measure J that does not allow funds to be used for the construction or expansion of roads outside of designated urban limit lines. Measure J funds can be used for planning, however.

"Environmentalists have gotten in on the Measure J language and are creating road blocks to getting funding for Vasco, saying that any expansion will help developers wanting to grow in the area," MacVittie said.

"But you don't control growth with dangerous roads," Piepho said. "Vasco was always an underdeveloped road. Highway 4 is about getting more traffic through. But Vasco is not about relieving congestion. It's 100 percent about safety."


Admittedly there is not a lot of public Measure J and ECCCFFA money out there, and transportation planners face the unenviable task of making one transportation dollar stretch to two and are staring at shortfalls across all of their projects.

But it's not all doom and gloom for Vasco. Other possible sources are emerging. On Sept. 5, State Senator Tom Torlakson will hold a special meeting in the Brentwood City Council Chambers to explore more funding options for Vasco safety. Torlakson is also proposing Proposition 1B, a \$20 million bond measure, to fund road improvements.

Piepho and MacVittie both have personal vested interests in making Vasco safer, using the road regularly. Piepho himself survived a major head-on collision on Highway 4 in Brentwood five years ago, which motivated him to work with Torlakson to establish a safety corridor between the Brentwood and Discovery Bay stretch of that road. He was also part of the task force responsible for introducing double fine zones on Vasco.

MacVittie and his wife use Vasco to get to work every day, and said they were three and five minutes in front of the fatal accident last month.

"Naturally things like that really hit home," he said.

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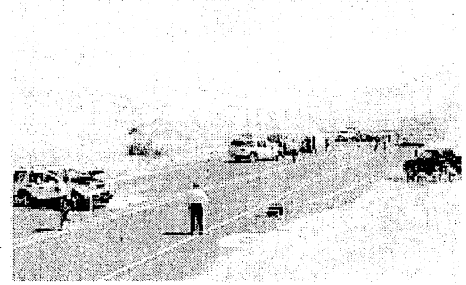
Vasco safety campaign gains momentum

Monty Norris

Published 08/25/2006 - 5:33 p.m.

State Sen. Tom Torlakson is urging the public to join his fight to get a bill signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger that would double traffic fines along some sections of Vasco Road as a means of reducing serious car crashes like the Aug. 14 accident that killed four men and injured two women.

"We need the public's support of SB3 (Senate Bill 3, the Vasco Road Double Fine Zone bill)," Torlakson told a press conference Aug. 18, held at the Brentwood Police Department headquarters. Torlakson said he sent the bill to the governor for his signature. The governor has until Aug. 28 to either sign or veto the bill. If he does neither, the bill will automatically become law.



"I'd like to see people writing and e-mailing and calling the governor," Torlakson said. "The bill is on the governor's desk right now, but it's only a small piece of the puzzle. Much more needs to be done. It's intolerable to leave things the way they are."

Torlakson will hold a public hearing at 10 a.m. Sept. 5 in the Brentwood City Council Chambers to look for ways to finance a median barrier. In addition to SB3, Torlakson is also the author of Proposition 1B, a \$20 billion bond measure on the November ballot that would earmark money for road improvements. Another bond measure, Proposition 1A, would prevent the governor and legislators from raiding transportation funds for other purposes. It also would require the state to repay money that has already been tapped for uses other than transportation projects.

In the meantime, however, Torlakson said doubling traffic fines for speeders will help make the winding, heavily used road safer. Signs warning motorists about the double fines also would be posted along the corridor.

"Double fines do work," said Torlakson. "We've seen the results on other dangerous roads. They're a consequence of breaking the law and endangering people's lives."

According to Torlakson, Vasco is "the number-one killer road in Alameda and Contra Costa counties and one of the top two or three in the state - if not number one."

Steps have been taken in recent years in an effort to make the road safer. Bright yellow vertical delineators were installed in some spots, as were rumble strips, to alert drivers drifting out of their lane. "Drive Safe/Stay Alive" signs are posted along both sides of the road.

Speed might well have been a factor in the most recent fatal crash. A Ford Tempo carrying the four men veered into oncoming traffic and was hit broadside by a Ford Expedition driven by Rosa Osborn of Oakley, who was not seriously injured. The driver of a third vehicle, a Ford Explorer, swerved to avoid the collision and flipped several times. The woman driver, also an Oakley resident, suffered a serious hand injury, according to Highway Patrol spokesman Scott Yox, who also attended the Aug. 18 meeting.

Osborn also attended the press conference and spoke briefly to the gathering.

"On Monday, I almost became a statistic," she said, choking back tears. "All the people in the car that hit me died. I'm so lucky to be alive."

At a meeting with law enforcement and elected officials and members of the Vasco Road Advisory Task Force following the press conference, Torlakson asked for suggestions from those in attendance.

"Something has to be done and done soon," he said. "This is a critical situation. We can't wait any longer. We have to have quick action."

Since 2000, there have been 16 fatalities on Vasco Road in Contra Costa County; fatality numbers for the Alameda side were not available. Torlakson pointed out that the road is a heavily used commute corridor, which adds to the problem.

"There's been a huge increase in commute traffic over the past 10 years," he said. "The number of cars using Vasco has gone up from about 16,000 daily a decade ago to about 22,000 now and heading to 25,000. In about 10 years time it's grown from a rural country road to a major commute corridor." Brentwood Councilwoman and task force member Annette Beckstrand told the gathering that without the passion and commitment of volunteers on the task force, none of the current improvements would be in place.

But she added that more must be done. "We need a regional partnership between Brentwood, Livermore and Alameda and Contra Costa counties," she said. "I know Livermore is very eager to partner with us."

Supervisor Mary Piepho told the gathering that "Contra Costa remains a committed partner" in the effort to make the road safer. "But we do need the public's support of SB3. Both the county and the CHP have been very aggressive in educating the public. But we need to take further steps. I agree that double fines do work. I saw that happen on Highway 4 on the section between Byron and Discovery Bay."

Torlakson said that ultimately the two cities and counties and the state legislature must find a way to fund a median barrier. "That's the only long-term solution," he said. "We're going to have to be creative and act quickly, even if it requires emergency legislation."

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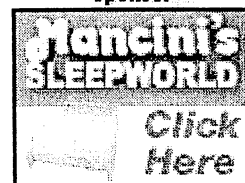
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Vasco Road To Receive Centerline 'Rumble Strips'

POSTED: 10:11 am PDT September 20, 2004

Crews will try to make one of the most dangerous roads in the Bay Area safer.

They'll begin installing a centerline 'rumble strips' on Vasco Road in Contra Costa County this week.

The strips make a loud noise whenever car tires run over them.

Four people died in a crash on Vasco Road 10 days ago. That crash brought the total number of deaths to 14 since 2001.

The *Argus* newspaper reports a concrete divider was too costly, so rumble strips will be installed instead.

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Task force reiterates Vasco Road safety needs



Posted on Thu, Sep. 23, 2004

Task force reiterates Vasco Road safety needs

By Melissa Moy
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

BRENTWOOD - Less than two weeks after four men died in a head-on Vasco Road crash, several residents and members of a safety task force advocated again Wednesday for the installment of concrete median barriers and other safety measures.

Although Contra Costa County leaders have said the two-lane county road could eventually be expanded into a divided road with four lanes, some say more should be done now.

"We need barriers out there, and we need them now," said Alyson Colton. Her husband, Jeff, is an executive with ValleyCrest Landscape Development, which lost four employees in the Sept. 10 crash.

The task force met at the Brentwood City Council chamber in anticipation of drawing a large crowd. More than 70 people attended.

The county is continuing to look for money to pay for Vasco improvements, Contra Costa County Supervisor Millie Greenberg said. One possibility includes a \$34 million proposal that would add concrete barriers along a 11-mile stretch of Vasco, and widen the shoulder to accommodate police and emergency workers at an accident scene.

Several task force members said they did not believe that even temporary barriers would cost that much money, and urged county leaders to investigate.

A \$485,000 rumble strip project for an 11-mile stretch of the road began Monday night, and includes the installation of flexible plastic yellow posts. The rumble strips help deter aggressive and inattentive drivers from crossing over the center line of the road. The project should be finished by mid-October, a county official said.

Beginning in September 2005, a federal grant will allow the CHP to continue stepped-up patrols of Vasco and pay for about 2,500 hours of officer overtime, said CHP associate transportation planner Meriko Hoshida.

The Sept. 10 crash was the first fatal accident on Vasco in more than a year. Seven people died in 2003.

Reach Melissa Moy at 925-779-7139 or mmoy@cctimes.com.

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Vasco Road bill would increase traffic fines

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Posted on Tue, Dec. 07, 2004

Vasco Road bill would increase traffic fines

By Rowena Coetsee
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ANTIOCH - Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, kicked off the new legislative session Monday by making good on his promise to reintroduce a bill targeting bad drivers on Vasco Road.

Senate Bill 3 would double the base fine for moving violations along the entire stretch of the popular but dangerous commute route connecting East County with the Tri-Valley.

Since Jan. 1, 2003, 11 people have died on the winding, two-lane road.

Moving violations include not only speeding and passing illegally -- the two most common problems on Vasco Road -- but also failing to yield, tailgating and driving under the influence, said Robert Oakes, Torlakson's press secretary.

Traffic tickets come with a fine that's made up of a base amount as well as penalties and fees each earmarked for different uses.

If Torlakson's bill succeeds, the total fine for drivers in Contra Costa County caught going up to 15 mph over the speed limit would jump from \$76 to \$111, Oakes said.

Speeders nabbed traveling 16 to 25 miles per hour above the limit would see that figure rise from \$135 to \$170, Oakes added.

The earliest that the governor would sign the bill into law is probably next summer, he said.

SB3 is identical to the legislation Torlakson first introduced Jan. 5 -- and that failed on the last day of the legislative session in August in part because critics thought the original draft had changed too much, Oakes said. Others thought the bill placed an unnecessarily heavy financial burden on low-income drivers.

Over the next few months, Oakes said, he and Torlakson will visit those naysayers in the hopes of clearing up misconceptions and changing their minds.

Torlakson said he also plans to come up with standards that can be used to choose the roads most worthy of receiving the double-fine zone designation.

Reach Rowena Coetsee at 925-779-7141 or rcoetsee@cctimes.com.

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wo crashes clog Vasco Road

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Posted on Thu, Dec. 09, 2004

Two crashes clog Vasco Road

Back-to-back crashes tied up Vasco Road just north of the Contra Costa County line for two and a half hours Thursday morning, but did not cause any serious injuries, California Highway Patrol officers said.

The first crash happened when a white pickup truck traveling north on Vasco about 5 a.m. swerved to the left, crossed the double yellow line and hit another white pickup, CHP Officer Tom Maguire said.

The first driver, a 40-year-old man from Brentwood, was treated for minor pain at Sutter Delta Hospital. The 47-year-old man whose truck was hit went to Valley Care in Pleasanton with a broken wrist, Maguire said.

A third vehicle was hit by debris.

Just as officers were reopening the road a, a white big rig jackknifed and slid into several hundred feet of guardrail north of the first crash, Maguire said.

The truck jackknifed just before 6 a.m. The driver told CHP officers that he had to swerve and slam on his breaks to avoid hitting a car that made a quick U-turn in front of him.

The road was finally cleared at 7:30 a.m.

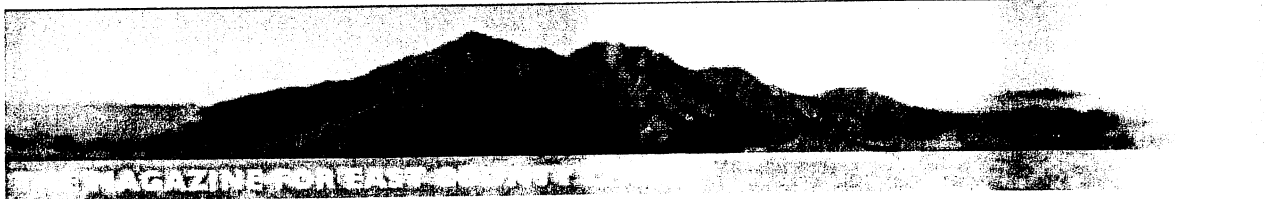
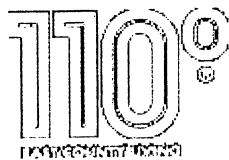
-- Nathaniel Hoffmar

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THE VASCO WARS

Piercing the Fog Surrounding Highway Safety Improvements

by Annette Beckstrand
 Photos by Russell Byrne

I was raised in Livermore and for years we drove our family station wagon to Brentwood in order to pick fruit, which we took home and turned into pantry shelves full of jam.

When three families who were friends of my parents' bought land in Brentwood in the 70s we laughed at them. "What are you going to do out there?" my parents asked. "You're going to die in the wilderness!"

Ten years ago we moved to Brentwood ourselves. We ran into our former friends who were astonished to see us. "What are you doing here?" they asked. "We just moved here," we said. They really laughed at us! "Do your parents know?"

Like so many other people, we moved here to get the quality home that we wanted. The big goal was for me to stay at home and not work, and moving to East County was the way we could do that.

We also moved here because we had the feeling that our kids would be safe. There are six kids in our family. My mom would pack our lunch and we would ride to the park. Eat our lunch. Pay a quarter to go swimming. Back home for dinner.

We couldn't do that in Livermore by the time my children came along. We could do that in Brentwood, however. We didn't have to worry about unsavory characters lurking around our parks.

Trying to Come to Terms with Vasco Road

Vasco Road is a painful topic for me. I find it difficult to subdue my passions and retain a politically correct detachment in the face of the maneuvering and political gamesmanship that have been played with this topic.

My connection with Vasco Road began almost a decade ago when I spent five months with my kids driving the old Vasco Road on a daily basis. Even then we



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were trying to cope with people driving far over the speed limit and passing improperly.

My husband commuted as well. He left home at 5:15 in the morning and got back home at 2:45 p.m. My eldest son commuted for three years. My second son commuted for a year.

I remember nights when I was standing over the stove, preparing dinner, while wondering if all my loved ones were going to get all right. If they were 45 minutes late I wondered if they were going to be getting home at all.

The Vasco commute became even more unsettling as the years went by.

So now it is difficult for me to be tolerant of some of the agendas — both disclosed and concealed — that seem continually to be fogging up the current Vasco Road debate as we talk and talk while waiting for issues to be resolved that somehow never get resolved.

After some of our meetings are finished I sometimes feel that we are even less clear about what we are doing than when the discussion began.

Opportunity Missed

A year ago the City of Brentwood offered to loan the county money that we believed, based upon our own engineering studies, would be sufficient for installing temporary barriers in the most dangerous sections of the road.

The City Council offered a \$1.5 million loan for ten years with no interest. This investment was to be made, not for long-term improvements, but as a short-term measure to save lives until the county and state could make permanent improvements.

Right from the beginning we were disappointed by the fact that our then County Supervisor, Millie Greenburg, sent a staff member instead of coming in person to accept our offer. We had hoped the county would be more enthusiastic about being presented with what seemed to us a great opportunity to address the problem.

We had done sufficient research to feel that we had a grasp on what was needed to save lives. If the county had simply spent the money on implementing the plan that we had created, we would have ended up with a barrier that would have eliminated the deadly crossover accidents that had plagued the road as out of control cars or vehicles passing improperly flew into oncoming traffic like balls crashing through pins in a bowling alley.

Tilting at Millie's Windmills

Rather than actually taking action, however, the county began to carry out its own research and to moderate a series of discussions about whether our proposal was the best thing, given the need for emergency vehicles to get to the scene of an accident and the necessity of providing sufficient breaks for local traffic.

We on the City Council thought that these issues could be dealt with and resolved by a committee charged with working out the details.

However, the county began by putting together a Vasco Road Taskforce, bringing representatives from the older Highway 4 taskforce under Millie's umbrella, together with citizen activists, Jeff Altman and Joann Flynn.

I suspect that the county put this group together as a public relations maneuver because Millie was taking a lot of political heat at that time. She was running for re-election and her campaign was suffering.

She was unwilling to take the decisive steps that we recommended and had provided the funds to pay for, but simply wished to put on a good face before the public. When the primaries didn't go well, she took the additional step of hiring Nolte Associates to make another study.

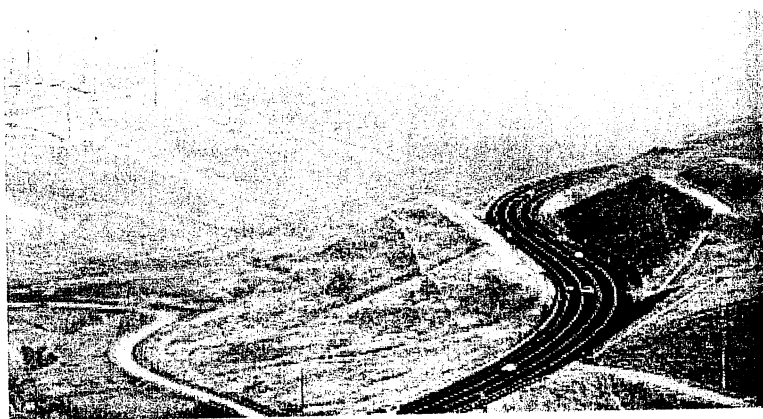
Nolte Associates was very qualified and the report they brought was comprehensive. However, the report missed the point completely, which was figuring out a way to save lives right now.

Instead Nolte put together the plan for the ultimate improvement of the highway, bringing it up to CalTrans standards in preparation for the day when the state would adopt the highway.

Of course, there is no \$90 million dollars available to bring the roadway up to the CalTrans standards. And even if they could find the money, CalTrans itself isn't going to have resources to take over Vasco Road in the foreseeable future.

I was incensed that the county should have warped the goal to such an extent. By commissioning this expensive and detailed report, they excused themselves from the need to implement the realistic improvements that would have saved lives in the short-term.

The county ignored the point that the goal was to minimize fatal accidents by preventing aggressive or careless drivers from threatening the lives of innocent people.



Talk! Talk! Talk!

Being in politics myself, I'm aware of the temptation for people in public office to develop an attitude that views the holding of endless meetings and conducting numerous studies to be the content of the job they were elected or appointed to do.

I'm on a mission to fight against that attitude. The job of people who serve the public should be to solve the problems that their constituents have. It isn't our purpose to merely give the impression of working on those problems through endless discussions about them.

Someone once said that the county will always institute a task force or conduct a research study in order to avoid actually doing anything — in this case actually erecting the traffic barriers that we need so much.

Just before adjournment of one of our task force meetings, I asked Millie, "What steps are you going to take between now and the next meeting to bring forward lifesaving improvements before any more deaths occur?"

My question was a loaded one because I knew she had no answer. The fact is, neither the county nor the state has a plan to do anything right now to get

those barriers into place.

I'm sure Millie thought my question was a bad one because, according to her way of looking at things, by conducting the task force meeting she had done something.

The only decision the county has made so far is a de facto one — by waffling around with the process they decided not to use the money we gave them to implement the short-term solution we suggested.

The grim fact remains that if the county had simply taken the money the City of Brentwood had offered and had used it to erect the barriers that our engineers had recommended, those four people in that van last fall who were killed by that irresponsible driver swerving in and out of the lanes of traffic would probably be alive today.

We're trying to talk to death issues that become actual life-and-death matters in the blink of an eye. People don't die by themselves. When those people died in that accident, the tragedy touched the lives of their widows, the 15 children left orphaned, and the eight grandchildren. Plus, who knows how many other lives were affected by that single, terrible moment.

Lessons from the Bypass

I'm actually in a good position to critique efforts that try to force Vasco Road improvements into inappropriate compliance with CalTrans standards since I currently am the chairperson of the Bypass Authority. We are responsible to ensure that design standards for the new bypass extension meet CalTrans guidelines.

Our contract with CalTrans obligates them to assume responsibility for the bypass, once it is completed. In exchange, they agreed to relinquish their control of the current part of Highway 4 that goes through Oakley and Brentwood.

The catch in the deal is that CalTrans is obligated to bring the Oakley/Brentwood part of the road up to the CalTrans standards before turning the road over to us.

We're currently three years away from the date that the State scheduled for adopting the Highway 4 Bypass. CalTrans has been attempting to hold us hostage in getting the permits necessary to finish the north end of the bypass on the condition that we would release them from their contractual obligation for fixing the current highway.

CalTrans is really in a bind, at this point. The state lacks the resources to meet their contractual obligations in fixing up the Oakley/Brentwood section of Highway 4. They don't have resources neither to assume maintenance of the Bypass nor the funds to fix up the existing highway.

So you see the foolishness of the county officials in worrying about spending \$94 million dollars in bringing Vasco Road up to CalTrans standards when there is no way CalTrans could possibly afford to actually adopt the road anytime in the next decade.

Counties all over the state have been adopting the kind of short-term solution we were advocating, but our county simply won't do this.

An impenetrable fog has settled in to obscure the Vasco Road improvement process. And I believe the fog has been intentionally created in order to blind people to the unwillingness to act on the part of the officials who are in control of the process.

The county isn't doing anything. They aren't planning to do anything. The county isn't going to spend \$94 million on fixing Vasco Road in Millie Greenburg's lifetime.

I'm personally encouraged by Mary Piepho's recent successful campaign to unseat Millie as our County Supervisor. I believe that Mary really has the best interests of our citizens at heart. I expect that she will provide actual leadership in identifying the information she needs and then taking action based upon that information.

I should add, at this point, that I believe Millie Greenburg to be a good-hearted person, herself. She was simply not equipped, perhaps, to carry out the duties that her position demanded of her.

Postscript

We think it is ironic that we moved to Brentwood so that "mom" could stay home and now I'm never at home. I work long hours, including most evenings, at a job that pays me \$550 a month. The fact is, I really like working on the City Council because I'm sure that the work of the council is having a tremendously positive effect on the community. There's more we should do than we are actually doing, but we're accomplishing things that really make the community a better place to live, work, and play. That feels good!

The City Council is at its best when we are able to do something like provide affordable housing for schoolteachers. Or provide more park space than any other city in the county. We are working hard to provide programs and amenities that make this a great place for a family.

I have blossomed in my public roles. Serving the public has become not only a passion but a source of genuine pleasure and fulfillment.

My ability to assume a leadership position in the community has come, in part, from the incredible guy I'm married to. From the beginning of our relationship my husband saw more value and worth in me than I did. I finally began to be curious about the person he saw when he was looking at me and tried to see myself through his eyes.

So my husband has become my supremely tangible example of unconditional love and encouragement. He's "The Wind Beneath my Wings."

My personal faith in God was the other part of my success in coming out of my shell. I'm on a life-long quest of trying to learn God's plan for my life. I've been realizing that as a daughter of God, I'm a person of individual worth.

So in a sense, God and my husband share the same view of me. They both think I'm a valuable person.

With that kind of awareness growing in my heart I began to lighten up on myself. I realized that I didn't have to worry about how I looked or what I said. It didn't really matter whether I appeared to be intelligent, or not.

For example, if both God and my husband think I'm good, should it matter if some political opponent doesn't have a good opinion of me?

The only thing that finally matters to me is the answer to the question, Am I doing what God wants me to do? Am I meeting the needs of my family? Am I meeting the needs of Brentwood Residents?

Getting my priorities straight at that level has brought the rest of life into order. I'm working for the benefit of others. I want to get the Vasco Road mess fixed up and I don't care who gets the credit. Everything doesn't always have to be

about me. I just want people to stop dying.

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ew signs fail to halt Vasco crashes in fog

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Posted on Fri, Jan. 21, 2005

New signs fail to halt Vasco crashes in fog

By Nathaniel Hoffman
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

More than a dozen cars crashed into each other Thursday morning in heavy fog on Vasco Road, snarling traffic on the perennially treacherous commuter shortcut.

The traffic tangle came one day after the county installed a series of new signs meant to remind speeding drivers to take it easy on the rural route.

Three vehicles collided at 8:50 a.m. just south of the Alameda County line, CHP Officer Steve Creel said. In the next 45 minutes, four more drivers within a mile of the first crash slammed into their fellow commuters, damaging 13 cars and trucks.

All of the drivers were headed south toward Alameda County.

The problem Thursday was heavy fog that left drivers with about 100 feet of visibility, Officer Cliff Kroeger said.

"This is a very typical scenario of what happens in the fog," Kroeger said.

While the Vasco crashes Thursday resulted in minor injuries, with only two people taken to hospitals, a fog-related crash on Cummings Skyway near Crockett seriously injured two drivers, Kroeger said.

Maintaining 55 mph with only 100 feet of visibility will not give a driver enough time to react to any hazard that might suddenly appear out of the fog, he said.

The new roadside signs, installed Wednesday by the Contra Costa County Public Works Department, remind drivers that Vasco Road has been declared a county safety corridor -- a road singled out for increased patrols and traffic-calming efforts.

A task force formed after a high number of fatal crashes along Vasco, including seven deaths in 2003.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho, who was stuck in the foggy mess Thursday morning, said the signs are a tool to increase driver awareness and safety.

Produced and installed at a cost of about \$20,000, the signs depict a narrow road winding through a picturesque and windmill-lined scene, with the warning to "Drive Safe, Stay Alive."

In the past year, Vasco Road has been resurfaced and restriped, and rumble strips added on the shoulders and between lanes, said Julie Bueren, deputy director of public works.

Piepho said officials also are considering putting up soft stakes between the lanes to keep drivers from crossing the center line.

The bright new stripes can help drivers navigate in the fog, Bueren said. Other safety measures the county has looked at, such as flashing lights, have not proved effective.

"A lot of the collisions out there are the result of bad driver behavior," she said.

The CHP says one safety measure will work: Slow down.

C.R.A.V.E.

Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences

Another Fatality

October 14, 2005

The California Highway Patrol has reported another fatality on Vasco Road. The following story was partially reported by KTVU:

The accident occurred on Vasco Road north of Dalton Avenue around 3:50 p.m. when an early 1990s GMC Blazer traveling south tried to pass on the right another southbound vehicle that had stopped to make a left turn, according to CHP Officer Steve Creel.

The Blazer went onto the right shoulder, lost control and overturned several times before coming to a rest and blocking the northbound lane, Creel said.

The right front passenger, Lorenzo Escobedo of San Jose, was partially ejected from the vehicle as it overturned and suffered fatal injuries. Investigators have not concluded if the victim was wearing a seatbelt, Creel said.

The driver was transported to Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley with unknown injuries, according to Creel.

Assemblyman Guy Houston Continues Support of Double Fine Zone

August 30, 2005

California Assemblyman Guy Houston continued his public support for the Vasco Road Double Fine Zone bill (SB-3). In a recent letter to Governor Schwarzenegger, Assemblyman Houston urged the Governor to sign the bill into law.


It is crucial that we all contact Governor Schwarzenegger and let him know we want to see SB-3 signed.

If you haven't done so already, please download a copy of the SB-3 support letter and send it to the Governor TODAY!

Speeding-Related Fatalities on Increase

NHTSA Report - Summer 2005

A recent report (June 2005) distributed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found a national increase in the number of speeding-related fatalities on roads like Vasco Road. A major proportion of fatal, speeding-related single-vehicle crashes occur on rural roadways in rural jurisdictions. The report shows a direct correlation with speed and fatal crashes.

 Download report (PDF) from NHTSA

Caltrans Opposes SB-3

August 23, 2005

Although Caltrans doesn't have jurisdiction over the Golden Gate Bridge and Vasco Road, state officials have recently come out against the bill. They fear a precedent which could lead to higher fines elsewhere in the state. Since most of the double fine legislation came from Democrats, some worry the Governor will use the Caltrans opposition to veto the measures. For now the Governor's office says it's studying the legislation and had made no decision.

Fire Department Chief Responds

August 23, 2005

Governor Schwarzenegger,

As a fire department chief officer and having responded to six of the last twelve fatalities on Vasco Road I strongly urge your support for SB-3, Vasco Road Double Fine Zone. We all must do everything possible to reduce the tragic losses and human suffering foisted upon our community by this dangerous roadway.

Citizens and elected officials have worked tirelessly as part of the Vasco Road Safety Task Force to bring about needed improvements such as rumble strips, vertical delineators, interactive speed signs, daytime headlight zones and billboards urging motorists to "Drive Safe-Stay Alive."

Now it is your opportunity to get involved and make a difference by signing the legislation before you. One more death is one too many and every possible avenue for improvement must be acted upon. Your signature on SB-3 will ensure that as our Governor, the top public safety official in the State of California, you too are willing to do your part in protecting the lives of those we serve.

Sincerely,

David Wahl
Brentwood, CA

CA State Assembly Passes SB-3

Thursday August 18, 2005 - The State Assembly passed SB-3 (Vasco Road Double Fine Zone) with a vote of 52-11. This advances the bill to final step before becoming law. C.R.A.V.E., along with others, has worked closely with Senator Torlakson to ensure he had the community support to help advance the bill. At this point, we have every reason to believe the bill will be signed into law by the Governor. We will know inside of 30 days.

Please check back soon. We will be heading up a special support campaign to show Governor Schwarzenegger our support for SB-3. If you want to email the Governor in the meantime, his email address is governor@governor.ca.gov

Fatal Fire Truck Accident

Sunday June 5, 2005 - One person was killed and at least four were injured after a tragic accident involving a fire truck and two passenger cars near the intersection of Vasco Road and Camino Diablo. Antioch resident Martha Cusimano suffered fatal injuries as a passenger of a Toyota Corolla. Two other people from the Toyota had major injuries and are listed in critical condition at John Muir Medical Center.

The fire truck also struck a Dodge van on Camino Diablo. Two children from the van were taken to Children's Hospital in Oakland with minor injuries.

The fire truck was responding to a grass fire. Three of the firefighters were treated for minor injuries at a local hospital. The accident is still under investigation.

Senate Passes Double Fine Zone Bill

On Wednesday, June 1, the California State Senate passed SB3, the Vasco Road double fine zone bill, with a vote of 21-12. This leaves two final steps. The State Assembly must approve the bill in September. Then the Governor must not veto the bill for 30 days after that. If all goes well, the bill will become law at the beginning of the year, lasting for 3 years.

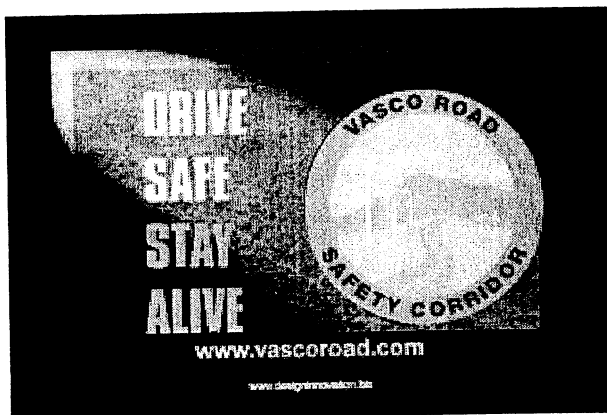
C.R.A.V.E. has been standing side-by-side with Senator Torlakson, who authored the bill, to ensure it has maximum support from concerned citizens. C.R.A.V.E. founder Jeff Altman has testified twice before a Senate committee at the State Capital, sharing his support of making Vasco Road a Double Fine Zone.

It's C.R.A.V.E.'s position that the Vasco Road Double Fine Zone will create a heightened sense of awareness on the dangerous road. It has been demonstrated that drivers are less likely to speed when the penalties are increased. And it probably goes without saying that excessive vehicle speed is a common factor in fatal accidents.

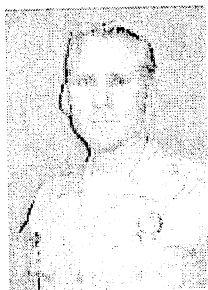
CineLux Delta Cinema Features Vasco

Road PSA

Select Brentwood movie theaters will begin featuring the Vasco Road Safety Corridor logo and message, "Drive Safe Stay Alive" as part of their pre-show community advertisements and other public service announcements. CineLux Delta Cinema in Brentwood is the first theater to feature the "Drive Safe Stay Alive" message as a public service announcement before each movie. This was made possible by the generosity of the Brentwood Rotary Club and Design Innovation.



Lawrence Livermore Labs Newsletter Article



Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's employee *Newsline* newsletter recently featured a Vasco Road Safety Corridor article written by CHP officer Scott Yox.

"Unfortunately for some commuters, planned retirement may not be the reason for their last ride to work. and it can come sooner than people anticipate."

--Scott Yox, CHP

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and its 8,000 employees participate in a wide range of civic endeavors. With an annual payroll of over \$660 million, the Laboratory is the largest employer in the City of Livermore and the fourth largest in Alameda County. The majority of the staff live in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Joaquin counties.

Senate Public Safety Committee Passes SB3

The California Senate Public Safety Committee passed SB3 with a 4-0 vote on Tuesday, April 26, 2005. This advances the bill one step closer to becoming law. C.R.A.V.E., along with others, has worked closely with Senator Torlakson to ensure he had the community support to help advance the bill. At this point, we have every reason to believe the bill will continue to be approved and eventually be signed into law by the Governor.

The Dilemma of Vasco Road

A Case Study of a Rural road in Transition. The *Dilemma of Vasco Road* article was featured in a five-part newsletter published in 2004 by the UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center (TSC). The TSC is a multidisciplinary venture led by the Institute of Transportation Studies and the School of Public Health at University of California, Berkeley. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. >> [Click here to read the article](#)

Sen. Torlakson Introduces Vasco Road Safety Bill

Senator Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, has introduced SB3, which will double base fines for traffic violations along Vasco Road in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. The Contra Costa Board of Supervisors asked Torlakson to re-introduce the double-fine zone bill. The legislation is part of a package of safety solutions on Vasco Road including a proposed median barrier, "Lights on for Safety" signs, and extra California Highway Patrol enforcement.

"Too many people have died on Vasco Road," said Torlakson, Chair of the Senate Housing and Transportation Committee. "I look forward to working with East Contra Costa County residents, their elected leaders, and my colleagues in the Legislature to make Vasco Road safer."
--Senator Torlakson

Want to help? There are two things you can do right away. First, contact Governor Schwarzenegger and let him know about SB 3 and how you support making Vasco Road a Double Fine Zone. Second, you can contact your California State Legislators and let them know you want them to support SB 3.

CONTACT GOVERNOR

CONTACT LEGISLATOR

Public Service Announcement

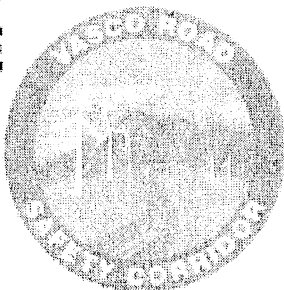
C.R.A.V.E. worked closely with Danica Northend, a recent graduate from Liberty High School in Brentwood, CA and six of her former classmates, including Bridges, 17, in filming a mock accident scene for a public service announcement (PSA). The PSA sends a sobering reminder to drive safely, and closes with a chilling summary of Vasco Road accident statistics. These students did an exceptional job creating these PSAs. C.R.A.V.E. has met with local T.V. stations about airing the PSA. NBC already aired the PSA as part of their 11:00 p.m. news and interviewed C.R.A.V.E. co-founder Jeff Altman, as well as another Vasco Road traveller who said he thought the message was powerful. [Click here to download the entire project \(4.9 MB\)](#). It can be viewed on the Windows Media Player. Special thanks to Dave George from the Contra Costa Fire Protection District for final engineering of the video for usage on television and the

Internet.

Safety Corridor Logo Approved

Vasco Road has now been officially designated a California Safety Corridor. Each Safety Corridor has a unique logo and slogan that are used to promote safe driving to motorists. The Vasco Road Safety Corridor's slogan is *Drive Safe. Stay Alive*. The emblem was created based on a design submitted by a Freedom High School student. The final artwork was prepared by C.R.A.V.E. member Jim Fryhling along with the CHP's Graphic Arts Department. The CHP will fund a public education and awareness campaign. Initial ideas include posters, brochures, stickers and other promotional items. Billboards, radio and T.V. will also be integral parts of the campaign.

**DRIVE
SAFE
STAY
ALIVE**



© C.R.A.V.E. — Concerned Residents About Vasco Experiences
Website by Greg Jordan Design

CHP opens new substation

Posted on Thu, Nov. 03, 2005

CHP opens new substation

By Danielle McNamara
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Six CHP officers began working out of a new substation here this week in an effort to improve response times to auto accidents and other East County emergencies.

"Response times from (Martinez) say to Discovery Bay can be lengthy. This is the growing part of the county, so having officers out there all the time will give us better response times for those communities," said CHP Officer Scott Yox.

The officers will keep their patrol cars, uniforms and report-writing equipment in an office at the Brentwood police station. They will rotate day, afternoon and weekend shifts.

One of the substation's key patrol areas will be Vasco Road.

More than 20,000 drivers a day use the two-lane road that runs from Brentwood to Livermore and Interstate 580. There's no barrier between the lanes and drivers often speed.

In 2003, seven people died on Vasco Road. Last year, four people died in a single crash and this year two people have been killed so far, according to the CHP.

"We're trying to reduce the number of people who are injured or killed on that section of highway," Yox said.

In addition to Vasco Road, officers will be closer to other main roads in far East County areas such as Marsh Creek Road, Byron Highway and the communities of Bethel Island and Discovery Bay.

"The communities out there will definitely see an improvement. We'll be able to get out there a lot quicker," Yox said.

The Contra Costa County Transportation Authority estimates that by 2030 the number of motorists who use Highway 4 each day is expected to more than double to 200,000. It is also estimated that 75 percent of people who live in East County work somewhere else and have to commute on the limited access ways such as Highway 4 and Vasco Road.

Yox said CHP dispatch system doesn't keep records that show how many calls come from specific areas of the county he has seen the volume of calls increase over the last few years.

Brentwood police Lt. James Martinez said his department and the CHP have been discussing the substation setup for a few months. Often, because of proximity, city police or Contra Costa County Sheriff's deputies in East County arrive at auto crash sites before the CHP.

The substation will also allow residents of unincorporated county areas to set up child safety seat inspection appointments. Previously, those residents had to go to Martinez to make sure their child safety seats are installed properly.

Danielle McNamara covers Pittsburg and Bay Point. Reach her at 925-779-7174 or dmcnamara@cctimes.com.

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Vasco Road safety plan shows results

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Posted on Sat, May. 20, 2006

Vasco Road safety plan shows results

EAST CONTRA COSTA: No fatalities have been reported since CHP launched program

By Danielle McNamara
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Nine months after launching an extensive safety campaign for Vasco Road, no fatal accidents have occurred, leading police to believe their efforts are working.

Rumble strips, plastic dividers, additional patrols and public awareness information are all part of the California Highway Patrol's safety corridor program, CHP officer Scott Yox said.

The Brentwood and Livermore police departments plan a similar effort using a \$203,000 grant awarded by the California Office of Traffic Safety that could add 24 hours of enforcement per week to the area.

The 15-mile, two lane, winding road that connects Brentwood to Interstate 580 in Alameda County has become notorious for frequent fatal accidents. In 2003, seven people died on Vasco Road. In 2004, four people died in a single crash, and one person died in 2005, Yox said.

There have been no fatal accidents since the dividers and rumble strips were added to parts of the roadway in July, as part of a one-year office of state Office of Traffic Safety grant awarded to the CHP that runs out this fall, he said.

"I think the statistics bear out that (efforts) have had a positive impact," Brentwood police Lt. Kevin King said. "I think it's all part of a positive reaction from the motor public. The delineators are keeping awareness alive."

Jeff Altman, whose wife, Patricia Altman, was killed in an accident on Vasco Road in August 2003, said the improvements have helped, but more should be done.

"Everything that has been done has made a difference and made it safer, but what ultimately needs to be done is a divided road and two lanes in each direction," he said. "I think our next step is a task force to get some bigger players involved and look at where the road will be five years down the road with more people."

Late last year, a CHP substation was opened in Brentwood to cut down on officer response time for east county emergencies and keep more cars at problem areas like Vasco Road. Officers keep their patrols cars, uniforms and report-writing equipment in the station.

CHP Officer Kerry Grimes, who works from the substation, has patrolled the stretch of Vasco up to the Alameda County line, issuing speeding tickets and handling fender benders this week.

He pulled a driver over -- right next to a roadside memorial -- for doing 73 mph in a 55-mph zone.

"Vasco gets our constant attention now," Grimes said. "The accidents I get are noninjury crashes, which say to me we're accomplishing our goal."

Grimes responded to a minor, rear-end accident along Vasco Wednesday morning that occurred after backed-up traffic stopped suddenly.

"A lot of time, the traffic just stops for no reason, and if people are following too close or aren't paying attention, this happens," he said.

Cecilia Anthonio, whose car was rear-ended, said she traverses Vasco three days a week to get to Chabot College in Hayward.

"Compared to Marsh Creek Road, this road isn't dangerous, but I see people pass each other here and I think wow. Everyone is in such a rush. I don't know why," she said.

King said although increased patrols will mean more ticket issuing, doling out fines is not the point.

"It is not our goal to issue more citations," he said. "It is our goal to reduce collisions."

afety on Vasco Road

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Posted on Tue, May. 23, 2006

EDITORIAL

Safety on Vasco Road

THIS IS ONE OF THOSE things that we bring up with great deal of trepidation, but we believe East County officials as well as law enforcement are to be commended for steps taken to make a deadly stretch of Vasco Road more safe.

The 15-mile stretch of winding, two-lane road that connects East County with Interstate 580 in Alameda County was becoming a death trap. In 2003, seven people were killed on that stretch of road. The next year four people died in a single crash.

These crashes prompted officials to take some action and the California Highway Patrol set the road up as part of the CHP's safety corridor program.

The safety steps have included installation of rumble strips and yellow, rubber dividers on the dangerous curves.

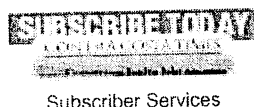
So far, those measures seem to be helping as there have been no fatal accidents on that road this year. That is certainly a fact for which we should be grateful, but it should not allow us to become complacent.

We are happy to report that does not seem to be the case. The Livermore and Brentwood police departments have landed a \$203,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety that will add as much as 24 hours per week worth of traffic enforcement to that stretch of road.

That action is designed to slow drivers down. The simple fact is that controlling excessive speed through that area is the single most important thing that can be done to reduce the risk of accidents.

Of course, no road is exempt from accident no matter what the precautions. But the steps that have been taken on Vasco Road are an example of the positive steps that can be taken by local governments and law enforcement to solve a serious problem.

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Brentwood, Calif.

Posted on Fri Jul 28, 2006

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Council withholds contract extension

Consultant will not see deal stretched to year's end unless specific goals are set for Vasco Road upgrade

By Tanya Rose
STAFF WRITER

BRENTWOOD - Brentwood officials want more stringent goals put into place for easing congestion along Vasco Road before they will extend a \$132,500 consulting contract into December.

Gray-Bowen and Company, Inc. has been the voice of the city on transportation issues, especially regarding Vasco Road, and though city officials said Tuesday they're generally happy with the firm's performance, they want more.

As Brentwood and surrounding cities have grown at breakneck speed, more and more motorists pile onto the meandering, two-lane roadway each day heading for jobs in the Livermore-Pleasanton area. There have been numerous fatal accidents, and East County cities have discussed ways to make the road safer.

The most recent tangible change to the road came when county supervisors approved the use of "delineators," or cones that go up along the center divide to keep vehicles in their own lanes. But behind the scenes, East County cities have been applying for transportation funds to pour into a roadway revitalization, and that money is finally coming in.

The rub, however, has always been the fact that the roadway straddles Contra Costa and Alameda counties. In order to reconfigure the road, both counties would have to sign off on new construction.

Right now, said Councilwoman Annette Beckstrand, the key is to come up with some sort of agreement between the two counties, so they can begin working together.

"We have the money now," she said, referring to approximately \$300 million that could go into Vasco Road widening. "Now, we need a partnership between the counties, and we need a lead agency, someone to take the lead on this."

None of those specific goals, however, were laid out in the Gray-Bowen contract.

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Until they're there, Beckstrand said she won't approve extending that contract into December. In addition to the extension, Brentwood officials also discussed a \$25,000 increase, plus a 10 percent contingency (all included in the \$132,500).

Bob Brockman agreed with Beckstrand, saying he is tired of consultants coming out with study after study; he'd like to see some action.

William Gray of Gray-Bowen said he agreed with the council in terms of coming up with more specific goals, and said he feels now is the right time to cement a relationship with Alameda County.

So far, there's been a lot of behind-the-scenes work going on, he said. It's a matter of making sure the timing is right, he said.

Among other things, Gray-Bowen's work with state Sen. Tom Torlakson and Assemblyman Guy Houston to include the Vasco Road corridor in S.B. 802 has allowed Vasco projects to be eligible for future state funding.

The council will discuss the contract at the next City Council meeting, scheduled for Aug. 8.

Reach reporter Tanya Rose at 925-779-7139 or trose@cctimes.com.



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Contra Costa Times Top H

Posted on Tue, Aug. 15, 2006

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Grisly wreck highlights danger on Vasco Road

By Rowena Coetsee and Kiley Russell
 CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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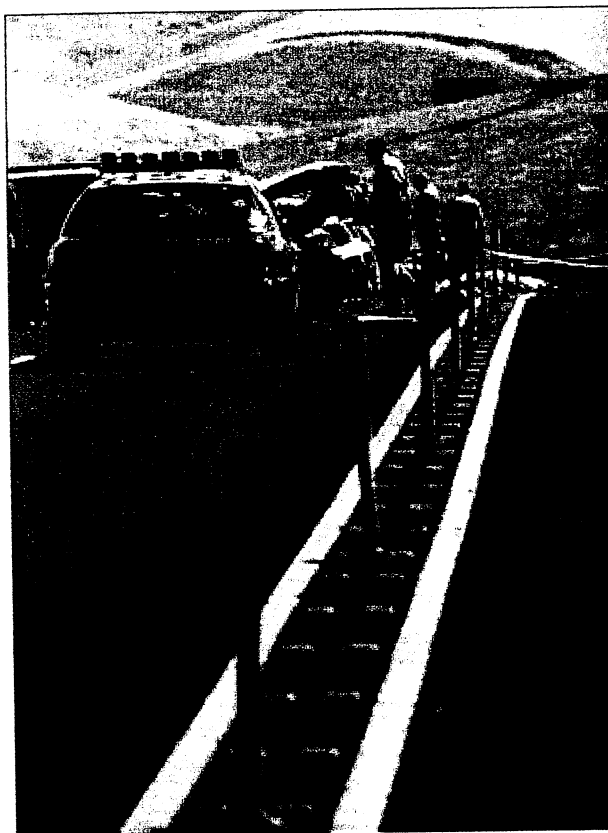
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The crash on Vasco Road that killed four people Monday heightened the sense of urgency in a years-long debate over how to reduce the number of accidents on the busy commuter route.

The approximately 16-mile winding road -- most of it two lanes and most of it in Contra Costa County -- became a hot topic of conversation among elected officials and their constituents in 2003, when seven people died on the stretch of road that links Brentwood in East Contra Costa County with Livermore in the Tri-Valley area.

And the possibility of tragedy increases along with the volume of traffic.

An estimated 16,000 vehicles traveled Vasco Road over the course of 24 hours in 1996; by last year that figure had risen to 22,000, according to Contra Costa County Department of Public Works.



Herman Bustamante Jr./Contra Costa Times

Safety on Vasco Road has been an issue for years. One improvement mentioned has been a solid median to stop head-on collisions.

- Four die in head-on crash
- Real-time traffic reports

One of those whose life has been forever changed by the danger is Jeff Altman.

"It's heartbreaking. It's terrible news," he said of Monday's three-car crash.

Altman became a leader in the push to make safety improvements to Vasco Road after losing his wife on the route during that bloody summer three years ago.

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He is a member of the Vasco Road Safety Task Force, which meets regularly.

Over the past several years, public officials have managed to put some safety measures in place: Contra Costa County's Public Works Department in fall 2005 installed "rumble strips" as well as raised yellow striping and reflective markers along the shoulders and median that together cause vehicles to vibrate loudly if drivers pass over them.

The county that year also installed 7 1/2 miles of 3-foot, flexible yellow poles as a visual cue down the middle of the road.

But these steps are still not enough, many say.

County Supervisor Mary Piepho wants a permanent, concrete divider along the center of the road to prevent drivers from crossing into oncoming traffic, which is what happened in Monday's head-on accident.

Brentwood City Councilwoman Annette Beckstrand agrees.

"How many more families are going to be devastated before we realize we've got to have a solid barrier?" she said.

Beckstrand noted that although reports of illegal passing seem to have dropped off, she still hears from constituents that the existing poles along the median don't stop aggressive drivers from knocking them over and barreling into oncoming traffic to pass a slower moving vehicle.

Proponents of a permanent median say Vasco Road also likely would have to be widened to four lanes, not only to accommodate the greater width of the barrier but to enable drivers to pass and provide shoulders so emergency vehicles can still get to an accident.

A more immediate, temporary fix would be to install the concrete blocks that Caltrans uses to separate opposing lanes of traffic during highway construction and widen the shoulders in places, said Beckstrand, noting that a countywide, half-cent sales tax and developer fees could help defray that cost.

And it's by no means just Contra Costa County's problem, she says. Public officials in Alameda County also bear responsibility for the deaths of Vasco Road drivers passing through their jurisdiction.

As such, she says they should be shouldering a larger share of the cost to find a solution.

Erecting a permanent barrier along the entire length of Vasco Road and widening it would cost at least \$200 million, according to Contra Costa County's Public Works Department.

"We can't pretend that each county is an island unto itself," Beckstrand said.

Beckstrand says she and Piepho have been pressuring area lawmakers' offices to bring the cities of Brentwood and Livermore to the table along with representatives from both Contra Costa and Alameda counties to identify possible sources of money that could pay for additional safety measures.

Alameda County currently is working on a roughly \$23 million project to straighten out some sharp curves on its stretch of Vasco Road and add truck lanes along steep climbs.

But there are still obstacles to more cooperation between the two counties.

Reluctant to have more traffic flowing onto its roads, Alameda County's policy is not to enlarge rural roads such as Vasco so that drivers will be more apt to use existing highways, said Dawn Argula, deputy chief of staff for Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty.

State Sen. Tom Torlakson, who has tried twice to get a bill through the Legislature that would double fines for Vasco Road traffic violations, said Monday that he plans to redouble his efforts.

In addition, a grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety has enabled California Highway Patrol officers over the past year to work overtime patrolling Vasco Road as well as to remind the public to be particularly vigilant on that route.

Although the infusion of money dries up at the end of this month, the city of Brentwood, using another grant, will pick up where the CHP leaves off.

Brentwood in April received a 19-month state Office of Traffic Safety grant to spend up to \$202,000 on efforts that include getting drunken drivers off Vasco Road and reminding people to buckle their seat belts.

Brentwood Police Department Lt. Kevin King said some of the money also will pay overtime for beefed up coverage along the part of Vasco Road that's in the Brentwood area.

Reach Rowena Coetsee at 925-779-7141 or Kiley Russell at 925-952-5027.

Recent Comments

Barriers on Vasco Road are indeed the answer. Granted there are...
Logic would solve this problem very easily. The number cars on a...
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Build up the concrete barrier!!!! or just close the vasco road for...
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EAST BAY Vasco crash could spur bill to double fines

- John Coté, Chronicle Staff Writer
Wednesday, August 16, 2006



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State Sen. Tom Torlakson seized on a brutal crash that left four construction workers dead Monday to push forward stalled legislation that would double fines along the dangerous East Bay road where the collision occurred.

"Sending the bill now while this tragedy is vividly in our minds is important to underscore that lives are at stake," Torlakson, D-Antioch, said when reached at his Sacramento office. "Why not have double consequences for those who are violating the law on a known hazardous, risky road? Why let people continue violating the law with reckless driving and weaving in and out traffic?"

Senate Bill 3 would double fines for moving violations along the 15-mile stretch of Vasco Road, a commuter artery snaking through Contra Costa and Alameda counties that connects the fast-growing Brentwood and Oakley areas with Interstate 580.

Twenty-one people have died in collisions on the road -- 16 of them on the 12-mile stretch through Contra Costa County -- since 2000, according to California Highway Patrol figures.

Torlakson's bill passed both chambers in the Legislature about a year ago, but the senator tabled it in September rather than sending it to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger after the governor's aides indicated he would veto it, Torlakson said.

Monday's fatal crash -- which has renewed calls from some local officials and community activists to widen the road and install a permanent barrier to prevent head-on collisions -- caused the senator to formally request that the bill be sent to the governor, who will have 12 days to either sign it or veto it.

Schwarzenegger "has not yet taken a position on that bill," said Darrel Ng, a spokesman for the governor. Schwarzenegger has vetoed similar bills, including one in September from Assemblyman Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, that would

have doubled fines for pedestrian-endangering traffic violations on 19th Avenue, a stretch of state Highway 1.

In at least one veto note, Schwarzenegger cited a Department of Transportation report showing that double fine zones, by themselves, "do not have any statistically significant effect on traffic safety."

Torlakson said the effect of his bill, in combination with increased patrolling and educational efforts, would improve conditions until funding is secured for median barriers, which he estimated would cost between \$100 million and \$200 million.

"Ultimately you're going to need a median barrier," Torlakson said. "That takes time. One way to make these roads safer on an intermediate basis is strong enforcement."

Traffic investigators would likely need weeks to complete their report on Monday's crash, in which the four construction workers were on their way to a job site in Brentwood when their Ford Tempo crossed into oncoming traffic and broadsided a Ford Expedition traveling south, CHP Officer Scott Yox said.

"We need to determine, if we can, why it crossed over (the center line)," Yox said. "We don't want to come to false conclusions."

The Contra Costa County Coroner's office identified one of the men as Javier Salazar, 29, of Hayward, but officials declined to release the names of the other victims until they had notified family members, who were out of the country, spokesman Jimmy Lee said.

Two of the victims were brothers, and all four were friends who had pooled their money to buy the Ford Tempo to commute to work, said Jason Newton, project manager at Wright One Construction in San Jose, where the men had worked for years.

"They had that car less than a week," Newton said. "It is absolutely gut-wrenching around here, to be quite honest with you. ... They were pretty tight-knit, very family-oriented people. Everybody was like a band of brothers."

Three of the victims were originally from Guatemala and one was from Mexico, Newton said.

"Were those the four breadwinners for four households?" said Annette Beckstrand, a Brentwood councilwoman. "How many lives have been devastated by (Monday's) accident, and why won't somebody come to the table and say can we patch the shoulders to allow us to put a solid barrier down the middle, something that will stop these drivers from crossing over?"

The problem, some officials said, was a lack of money and making the project a

regional priority. The road cuts through two counties with different goals, and it is competing for funding with such projects such as improving BART and adding a bore to the Caldecott Tunnel.

"Vasco Road is a top priority, but it's competing with a lot of top priorities," said Contra Costa County Supervisor Mary Piepho. "The bottom line is, we're having fatalities on Vasco, and that elevates it in my mind automatically."

E-mail John Cote at jcote@sfgate.com.

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Local News



Posted: Monday, 14 August 2006 9:41PM

Vasco Road Opens Again, Nearly Ten Hours After Quadruple-Fatal Accident

Livermore, Calif. (KCBS) -- Vasco Road at Camino Diablo in Contra Costa County -- near the Alameda County border -- has been re-opened nearly 10 hours after a quadruple-fatal collision closed it to traffic Monday morning, the California Highway Patrol reported.

The four men who died in the multi-vehicle collision all worked for the same San Jose company and were heading out to a construction job in Brentwood, CHP Officer Scott Yox said. Investigators say it could be some time before they determine what caused the horrific accident. The men killed were all from Hayward.

Vasco Road is a popular route for commuters traveling between Brentwood and Livermore. But navigating it can be difficult with vehicles often going faster than the posted speed limit and accidents on the narrow stretch of road frequent. "More witnesses seem to be coming forward and we welcome that," Yox said.

According to the California Highway Patrol, the accident happened when a Ford Tempo with four men inside, was traveling at about 65 to 70-miles-per-hour when it crossed the center divide and struck two other vehicles. "It went head on with the Ford Expedition and then later on the Ford Explorer was involved. Uncertain how it was involved, but it did overturn," according to Officer Yox. One occupant of the Tempo was ejected from the vehicle. The posted speed limit on the stretch of the road is 55-miles-per-hour.

The front of the Tempo was crushed like an accordion according to KCBS' Padilla who is at the scene. Both SUVs sustained major damage.

"The Ford Expedition had one occupant. She is the one who went head on. She has minor injuries. She was complaining of chest pain and it's uncertain if she has any further injuries. She was transported to John Muir Hospital. The Ford Explorer had a critically injured patient and she was also taken to John Muir Hospital," said Officer Yox.

The driver of the Explorer sustained major injuries when the vehicle overturned apparently trying to avoid the crash ahead according to the CHP.

Broken glass, car parts and torn tires were scattered on the roadway. Several CHP accident investigators remained on the scene.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Mary Piepho came to the accident scene. "I feel so bad for both families involved," she said. Supervisor Piepho is a member of the Vasco Road Safety Task Force that provided extra CHP patrols on the narrow road. That extra funding source expired this month.

The accident happened on the southbound side of the road near the dumps just north of the Alameda and Contra Costa County line.

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KCBS - Vasco Road Opens Again, Nearly Ten Hours After Quadruple-Fatal Accident

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"It occurred about 20-minutes to eight. We've had officers on the scene for a while now. We've got Vasco Road closed in both directions," said CHP Officer Brian Land at the scene.

The two women in the SUV's are Oakley residents.

The accident investigation is expected to take all day with Vasco not expected to be open until 6 p.m. Alternate routes between Brentwood and Livermore are strongly suggested.

KCBS' Padilla noted there was a sign posted on the side of the road at the accident scene that reads: "Drive Safe. Stay Alive."

(Photos courtesy of CBS 5)

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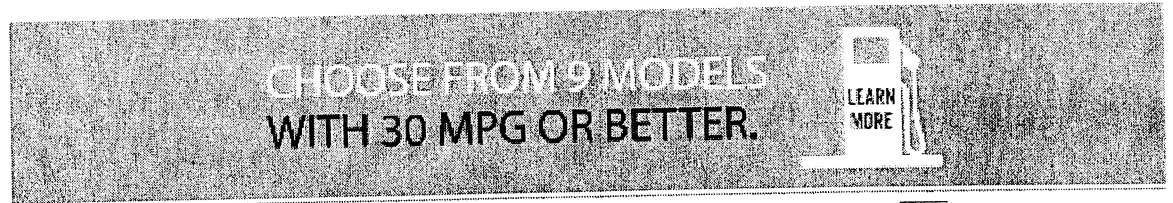
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News

Posted on Fri, Aug. 18, 2006

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Double-fine zone bill sent back to governor

EAST CONTRA COSTA: Fatal accident on Vasco Road inspires senator to give legislation another chance

By Rowena Coetsee
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

This week's four-fatality crash on Vasco Road is bringing state Sen. Tom Torlakson to Brentwood today in a last-ditch effort to persuade the governor to sign his double-fine zone bill.

Torlakson, D-Antioch, will hold a news conference this morning to marshal public support for a bill that for three years would double the base fines for any traffic violations on Vasco Road.

"I just became convinced that it's going to help save some lives," Torlakson said.

He also has invited a Rio Vista company that manufactures median barriers -- a safety measure Torlakson thinks would be even more effective than raising fines -- to talk about what more might be done to diminish driving hazards on the winding, two-lane route that links Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

In addition, Torlakson will meet with local politicians, members of the Vasco Road Safety Task Force and other area residents concerned about the dangers.

His goal is to solicit opinions on the idea of installing a permanent barrier down the middle of Vasco Road as well as gather suggestions for additional safety features.

News that four construction workers died in Monday's head-on collision prompted Torlakson to put Senate Bill 3 back on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's desk hours after the accident.

The governor has 12 days to sign or veto the bill. If he takes no action, the proposed legislation automatically becomes law.

Torlakson introduced SB 3 in December 2004 -- his second attempt at making Vasco

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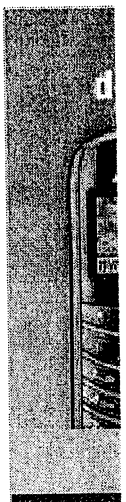
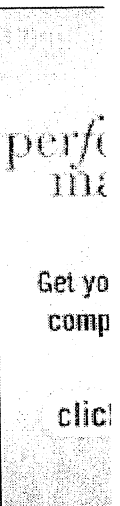
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Road a double-fine zone -- and nearly nine months later, only a stroke of the governor's pen stood between the bill's success.

Torlakson withdrew the proposed legislation after the governor's office told him Schwarzenegger would veto this double-fine zone as he had two earlier ones.

But with the last day of August -- and this legislative session -- rapidly approaching, Torlakson decided it's worth trying one more time rather than letting the bill expire and having to go through the entire approval process again.

Torlakson's office also sent out an e-mail Tuesday urging the public to show its support for the bill by contacting the governor's office.

"He has stood for tougher law enforcement and this is a law enforcement issue," Torlakson said, noting that Schwarzenegger has signed dozens of get-tough-on-crime bills.

"Why not give people double consequences?" he said of the proposed fines.

A spokesman for the governor's office said it is policy not to comment on pending legislation.

State Department of Transportation officials point to a 2002 study the agency did that found double-fine zones by themselves to have only a marginal effect on collision rates.

And that's true if they're the only tactic used to influence driving habits, Torlakson says.

But in the case of Vasco Road, raising fines would be just one facet of a multi-pronged approach, Torlakson said.

Local government already is using law enforcement and physical improvements to make the arterial route safer.

Torlakson said he believes that Caltrans officials and the governor's office also oppose double-fine zone bills because they fear the concept will become too popular.

If scores of politicians hoping to boost their public image introduce these bills, the resulting proliferation of double-fine zones could dilute the tool's effectiveness, Torlakson said.

Reach Rowena Coetsee at 925-779-7141 or rcoetsee@cctimes.com

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Stop the carnage on Vasco Road; make it four lanes

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Posted on Sun, Aug. 20, 2006

EDITORIAL

Stop the carnage on Vasco Road; make it four lanes

ONCE AGAIN, WE MUST face the dreadful reality that Vasco Road in eastern Contra Costa and Alameda counties is a death trap.

We have written about it for years. People who must traverse the 16 miles of winding, mostly two-lane road have shouted loud and long about its dangers.

Family survivors of those who have been killed on that road have worked hard as well in an attempt to drive improvements.

Yet, here we are again.

Early last week those dangers again were exposed in gory detail for all to see as four construction workers on their way to a job site were killed in a head-on collision on Vasco Road.

In the past 10 years the traffic on the road has increased dramatically. In 1996, the road carried an average of about 16,000 vehicles a day, but today that average exceeds 22,000 vehicles each day. That is a tremendous increase.

In 2003, seven people were killed on that relatively small stretch of road.

Some things have been done throughout the years, especially after that horrible 2003 body count.

Contra Costa's Public Works Department installed "rumble strips" as well as raised yellow striping and reflective markers along the shoulders and median. The county also installed some three-foot, flexible yellow poles down the middle of the road that are designed to act as visual cues.

But clearly not been has been enough.

Since 1999, that stretch of road has seen eight collisions in which at least one death occurred, and it averages about 43 collisions per year. That is far too many.

We understand why Contra Costa Supervisor Mary Piepho and Brentwood Councilwoman Annette Beckstrand want to establish a permanent, concrete divider along the center of the road. Such a barrier would prevent drivers from crossing into oncoming traffic.

Building such a concrete barrier would cost about \$200 million, according to the officials at public works. That is a hefty sum and really is not a sufficient fix.

The true problem with Vasco Road is that it is too small. It should be a four-lane highway and everyone knows it.

Contra Costa officials over the years have often pushed such a solution, but Alameda County officials have been reluctant to have more traffic dumping onto their roads.

They have failed to see the reverse-commute issues. Beckstrand has pointed out that eight of the last nine people killed on Vasco Road have been Alameda County residents. That clearly makes this a regional problem.

Alameda County has not wanted to enlarge many of its rural roads because they say they want to encourage drivers to stay on existing highways. But that is a policy that is, at best, obsolete.

Vasco Road needs to be widened to, in fact, encourage people to get off Interstate 580, which has already become a parking lot.

But the news is not all bad.

Stop the carnage on Vasco Road; make it four lanes

- Alameda County has committed roughly \$23 million to a project that will install some truck lanes and straighten sharp curves on its section of Vasco Road.
- An Office of Traffic Safety grant has enabled California Highway Patrol officers to work overtime patrolling the road as a reminder to drivers that they should slow down and obey traffic laws.
- In April, Brentwood received a 19-month grant to spend up to \$202,000 to get drunken drivers off the road as well as to remind drivers to wear safety belts.

All of those things are a good beginning, but it is still not nearly enough.

We think that the \$200 million it would cost to erect a permanent barrier would be better spent on getting to the business of making Vasco a four-lane road.

But that is not going to happen anytime soon. At the very least, temporary concrete dividers such as the ones used in highway construction zones should be placed in the center of the road.

State Sen. Tom Torlakson must continue to push his twice-failed state legislation that would establish Vasco Road as a double-fine zone.

Action is needed and it is needed now. Not commissions, task forces and meetings, but productive action. Fixing Vasco Road must become a priority for Contra Costa, Alameda, the state, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and all surrounding cities. People are dying on this road.

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Annex F

Promotional Items




Vasco Road Pens



Vasco Road Pencils

Safety is a Team Effort

**DRIVE
SAFE
STAY
ALIVE**



- When driving Vasco Road**
- Pass with care and **ONLY** in passing zones.
 - Be patient--Don't speed.
 - Obey all traffic laws.
 - **NEVER** drink and drive; and always buckle up!



La Seguridad es un Esfuerzo de Equipo

**MANEJE CON
CUIDADO
PERMANEZCA
CON VIDA**



- Cuando conduzca por el Vasco Road**
- Adelante con cuidado y **ÚNICAMENTE** en las zonas donde es permitido hacerlo.
 - Tenga paciencia - Modere su velocidad.
 - Obedezca todas las leyes de tránsito.
 - Si toma, no maneje; y siempre abroche su cinturón de seguridad!



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(actual size = 4-1/4" W x 5-1/2" L)

Annex G

Rack Card: English and Spanish

DRIVE SAFE STAY ALIVE



Safety is a Team Effort

Safety is a Team Effort

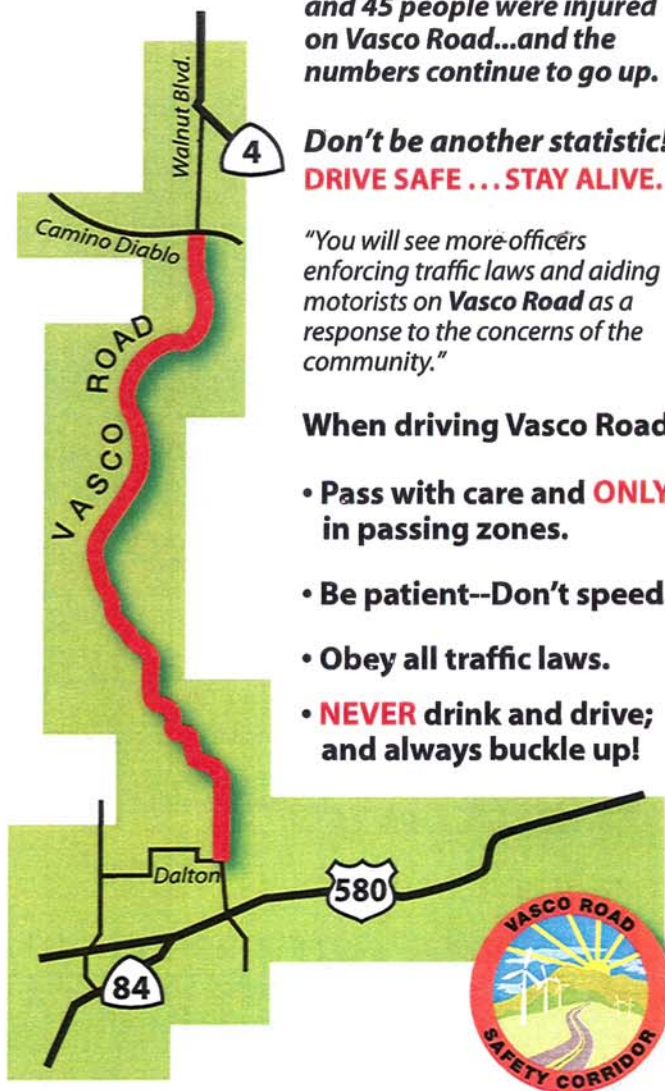
In 2003, 7 people were killed and 45 people were injured on Vasco Road...and the numbers continue to go up.

Don't be another statistic!
DRIVE SAFE ... STAY ALIVE.

"You will see more officers enforcing traffic laws and aiding motorists on Vasco Road as a response to the concerns of the community."

When driving Vasco Road

- Pass with care and **ONLY** in passing zones.
- Be patient--Don't speed.
- Obey all traffic laws.
- **NEVER** drink and drive; and always buckle up!



Dial 911 to report a drunk driver or other emergencies such as a crime in progress, a medical emergency, or a collision blocking traffic lanes.

"If you have any comments or suggestions, call 1-800-TELLCHP."



MANEJE CON PRECAUCIÓN CUIDE SU VIDA



La Seguridad es un
Esfuerzo de Equipo

La Seguridad es un Esfuerzo de Equipo

Durante el año 2003, 7 personas murieron y 45 fueron heridas en Vasco Road...y los números siguen aumentando.

¡No se convierta en una estadística más!

**MANEJE CON PRECAUCIÓN...
CUIDE SU VIDA.**

"Usted notará más oficiales que estarán haciendo cumplir las leyes de tránsito y ayudando a los conductores que transitan Vasco Road, como respuesta a las preocupaciones de la comunidad."

Cuando conduzca por Vasco Road

- Rebase con precaución y **ÚNICAMENTE** en las zonas donde es permitido hacerlo.
- Tenga paciencia – Modere su velocidad
- Obedezca todas las leyes de tránsito.



Marque el 911 para reportar a un conductor ebrio o cualquier emergencia, como un crimen que esté ocurriendo en ese momento, una emergencia médica o un choque automovilístico que esté obstruyendo algún carril de tráfico.

"Si usted tiene algún comentario o sugerencia, llame al 1-800-TELLCHP."

